

## **CHAPTER 9      NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE PLANS**

### **Natural Resources Plan**

East Coventry Township has been identified in previous chapters of this Comprehensive Plan as having a strong heritage of rural and agrarian characteristics. The presence and abundance of natural resources has, in large measure, influenced that character. It is the purpose of this chapter to establish the importance and significance of those resources found in the Township and to address means to preserve and perpetuate them. Chapter 3, Existing Conditions, has presented an inventory of resources, with descriptions and mapping. The Natural Resources Plan will expand on that inventory. Such a plan is a requirement of the Municipalities Planning Code of Pennsylvania, Section 301. It is not the intent of this plan to supersede various acts of the State Legislature which pertain to the elements of this plan. What is intended is to propose methods to preserve significant quantities of resources with the result being areas of the highest quality resource. A case in point is the need to establish measures to maintain farmland on prime agricultural soils. See Figure 3.4 for mapping of prime agricultural soils. These soils are a great asset and become of much less value if allowed to be developed with non-agricultural uses.

A variety of techniques will be discussed, depending on the nature of the resource, its degree of threat, the consequences of not protecting it, and its geographical context. The natural resources which will be evaluated are as follows:

- Geology
- Groundwater
- Soils
- Topography
- Hydrology
- Biotic Resources
- Scenic Resources
- Historic Resources

### **Geology and Groundwater**

Although it is possible to discuss these two resources separately, their relationship is so strong as to warrant their combination. From a land use planning point of view, the predominant issue is the ability of the geology to be a conduit for surface water to recharge subsurface aquifers. Different geologic

structures accomplish this in varying degrees. Highly fractured rocks offer many conduits for water to seep into the aquifers. Sands and gravels, and in some areas limestone formations, have large storage capacities. It is readily apparent that other liquid substances could reach the aquifers in the same manner as water, potentially contaminating the domestic and agricultural water supplies. In order to prevent unwanted infiltration, precautions need to be taken on the ground. The Township presently has a regulation requiring the periodic monitoring of on-site waste disposal systems. The following are recommendations for actions to be taken to further preserve groundwater quality and quantity:

1. Encourage the use of cluster type housing developments for future growth in areas designated as being appropriate, with on-site sewer and water service. Growth areas should not be over geology that has high recharge capability.
2. Promote programs of the Soil Conservation Service that address agricultural techniques that manage the use of fertilizers and pesticides that can infiltrate into the groundwater. These practices can be applied to farms as well as to residential lots.
3. Similar to 3 above, regulate the commercial and industrial use and storage of chemicals and petroleum products, particularly above geologic formations providing ready infiltration into the groundwater.
4. Extraction of earth products should be done with a high degree of regulation, since quarry operations occur in areas of the geology that can easily be contaminated with runoff from surrounding areas, chemicals or petroleum products.
5. The Township should cooperate and coordinate with County, State and Federal agencies to monitor the conditions of underlying aquifers. Periodic well testing on a Township-wide basis will establish a base line of water quality and aquifer levels.

### Soils

The major issue in this category is the presence of prime agricultural soils in the Township. These soils have been mapped in Chapter 3. The locations of such soils have historically been the areas of highest agricultural production. Two factors can diminish the value of these soils to agricultural productivity. First is the erosion of the soils from farmland due largely to practices that allow surface water runoff to scour tilled lands. Second is the economic factor of farmland

being converted to non-agricultural uses. This is the result of development pressures being applied to farmland, through increasing taxation (based on higher land value) and the spread of suburban growth into areas previously used for farming. Suburban sprawl can be checked by many means, one of which is the establishment of defined growth areas within the municipality, presumably in areas of less productive soils and suitable infrastructure. In an effort to maximize the use of prime agricultural soils and retain farming as a viable element of the Township character, the following recommendations are made:

1. An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance should be adopted that limits the kinds of land uses that can be placed on areas of prime agricultural soils in agricultural preservation areas. Such use should be agriculturally related, such as cropland, pastureland, orchards, nurseries and other similar uses. Residential use should be limited to accessory housing.
2. Adopt and use the provisions of such techniques as transfer of development rights, conservation easements and land trusts to preserve valued farmland. The intent is to divert development pressure from farmland, toward areas with soils less suitable to agriculture.
3. Coordinate with the Soil Conservation Service to institute programs encouraging Best Management Practices (BMP) to be utilized on farms. A BMP plan should be prepared for each farm, including the use of plowing techniques designed to minimize the erosion of soils, manure storage and crop rotation.
4. Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance provisions should be reviewed and strengthened to require the stabilization of slopes with vegetation. This is also a factor in the section dealing with topography, but is placed here to add emphasis to the need to retain soils from being eroded by surface runoff from all lands of the Township, not just agricultural.

### Topography

East Coventry Township has a range of topographic features, ranging from relatively flat lands to steeper areas. These are expressed as percentages of slope and combined into range intervals, such as 10% to 20%. At a given location, the slope of an interval of distance can be calculated by dividing the vertical rise in elevation by the horizontal distance. For instance, an area that rises 10 feet in a distance of 100 feet has a slope of 10%. Of concern is the

ability to retain soils and vegetation on steeper slopes when the ground is disturbed. Development of steep slopes can be accomplished successfully with measures in place to minimize erosion. There are engineering techniques available to allow for steep slope development, for in many parts of this country steep slopes are commonplace. However, in this Township, most areas are of less than 20% slope, encompassing about 85% of the total area. Nevertheless, it is important to regulate the use of steep slopes to preclude erosion. Unless a developer can demonstrate the ability to develop steep slopes responsibly and with good results, no disturbance of such slopes should be permitted. The following recommendations are made to ensure to preservation of steep slopes:

1. The Township should amend its Zoning Ordinance to create a Steep Slope overlay district, which would classify slopes over 25% as prohibited slopes and those between 15% and 25% as precautionary slopes. Regulations and permitted uses for each should be implemented, with development of prohibited slopes being highly discouraged.
2. Develop an appeal process that would allow consideration of proposals where a developer could satisfactorily demonstrate an ability to develop within a steep slope and still accomplish the goals of the ordinance.
3. Implement design standards requiring the establishment of vegetative cover and maintenance to retain soils on designated steep slopes.

### Hydrology

The subject of hydrology encompasses the surface waters that flow through the Township, in addition to the floodplains and wetlands associated with them. As has been described in Chapter 3, there are several significant watercourses within or adjacent to the Township. The Schuylkill River is by far the largest waterbody and it forms the northern boundary of the Township. There are numerous floodplain and wetland areas associated with it, as well as tributaries. Pigeon Creek is the largest of those tributaries in the Township and is considered a high quality stream by the State. It joins the Schuylkill River at the border with East Vincent Township. Portions of the Township are also within the drainage basins of French Creek (located south of East Coventry) and Stony Run (located primarily in East Vincent Township). The protection of these streams and rivers and their associated floodplains and wetlands is important for several reasons. A stream with adjacent vegetation will be stable and less prone to erosion. It will also be cooler in temperature, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. The regulation of floodplains and the land uses permitted is significant because of the relationship of floodplains to flood storage capacity.

Disturbance or development of floodplains diminishes that capacity by either decreasing the area of the floodplain or by impeding the flow of flood waters. Freshwater wetlands found within the Township are significant for their ability to provide habitat for many animals and to aid in the storage of flood waters. The need to regulate hydrologic systems is the subject of the following recommendations:

1. Maintain the Township's floodplain regulations in the Zoning Ordinance and consider combining them with other natural feature regulations into a comprehensive Natural Features overlay district. Where necessary, the FEMA established 100 year floodplain should be augmented by local engineering studies.
2. Permitted land uses within defined floodplains should be reviewed to insure that only uses such as agriculture and passive recreation are permitted. Other forms of development have the potential to impede flow.
3. Consider adoption of a Riparian Buffer Area ordinance which addresses the entire riparian system, including the requirement of adjacent development to plant appropriate trees on the stream banks.
4. Wetlands are not always adjacent to watercourses and need to be protected from development practices. Wetlands are identified by soil characteristics, plant communities and moisture conditions.

### Biotic Resources

The presence of plant resources, from the smallest moss to the largest hardwood tree, contributes to the visual image of East Coventry Township as a place of rural character. They can be found individually or in large woodlots, but each make up a network of plant resources which provides habitat for diverse animals. Even hedgerows can be part of the network, creating opportunities for wildlife to move from one area to another with a degree of protection from predators. Planted areas also contribute to the stability of soils, as noted earlier. The following is a list of recommendations to foster the retention and enhancement of biotic resources:

1. Adopt design standards in the Zoning Ordinance that limit the cutting of established trees of a given size, with provisions for replacement of cut trees by a quantity at least twice those removed.

2. Owners of large tracts should be encouraged to retain meadows and hedgerows for their habitat value to wildlife. The use of conservation easements is appropriate in this case. This can be promoted through the use of educational bulletins sent to landowners.
3. Explore the use of conservation easements and land trusts as means to preserve biotic resources. Appropriate areas can be made available for limited public use.

### Scenic Resources

The elements that make up scenic resources are taken from the preceding categories and, along with historic resources, collectively form the visual image of the Township. From the rolling terrain to the stream valleys, there are numerous places of scenic value. Critical to the concept of scenic resources is the need for vantage points. Pedestrian trails through natural areas obviously provide many great views. There are also several roads in the southern part of the Township that offer motorists scenic views. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this. Of concern from a land planning perspective is the ability to preserve these scenic assets within the context of growth management. It is important to know where the significant areas are and to be aware of the need to protect views of areas and views from areas. As growth occurs, consideration of the visual impact to and from a site will become increasingly important. The following are offered as suggestions to further the protection of scenic resources:

1. Continue to identify and map vantage points, scenic areas, distance to areas, and directions of viewing. This information should be done throughout the Township, particularly in areas of future growth.
2. Require the development of land to preserve scenic resource attributes for the subject site, both toward the site from outside and from within the site viewing outward. Where critical areas are identified, consider the use of conservation easements to preserve portions of a site.
3. Adopt design standards as part of the Zoning Ordinance that require the use of landscape buffering to shield from view any site development found to be intrusive to an otherwise scenic resource.
4. Allow for site plan modifications that would permit a site to be developed alternatively to take advantage of features such as topography to shield development.

## Historic Resources

The value and extent of historic resources within the Township has been discussed in Chapter 3. The significance and need to protect and preserve these sites has been well established. These resources are a critical element of the visual image of the Township and form the local heritage. Those characteristics of the area that drew the early settlers to East Coventry are somewhat the same as the current appeal. Unfortunately, the growth of the area doesn't always have a positive effect on the preservation effort, often degrading the context of the historic area. This is further complicated by the fact that it is often less expensive to develop a new building than to convert and adapt an historic building to a new use. It is necessary to view historic structures differently within the land development process. Frequently, it is necessary to make accommodations for them that would otherwise not be desirable for a new structure. For their continued vitality in the community, not all historic structures can be museums. Ways need to be found to integrate them into the fabric of the Township. The following recommendations are made toward that goal:

1. Continue to add to the inventory of information about historic structures, including agricultural and industrial buildings and bridges. All forms of current technology should be employed to record information.
2. The Historical Committee should coordinate assistance to historic building owners for recognition from national and state organizations, such as the National Register of Historic Places. Such recognition not only connotes historic significance, but can provide standards for modifications and appearance.
3. Adopt an Historic Zoning overlay district, which would encompass the unique standards necessary to perpetuate historic structures and districts.
4. Develop programs that encourage the continued use of historic buildings or adaptive reuse. Investigate Zoning Ordinance amendments that would allow mixed uses in historic structures and dimensional standards modifications.
5. Advise owners who should investigate the use of grants available for repair and maintenance of historic structures and provide information to owners. Grants are available for buildings that qualify and may require recognition as noted in 2 above.

## Summary of Natural Resources Plan

The natural resources of East Coventry Township have been noted throughout this Comprehensive Plan as being instrumental in its visual image and character. The Township has great appeal because of its rolling terrain, stream valleys and woodlands. Despite several centuries of development and growth, there are still good levels of natural and visual amenities to be found. It is the intent of the Natural Resources Plan to propose ways for the Township to implement strategies that will protect and preserve its natural features.

Given the assumption that development growth at some level will continue to occur in the Township, it is imperative that consideration be applied to the balance between development growth and natural resources preservation. Threats to these resources can be the potential consequences of development that is allowed to sprawl across the Township. It is well recognized in Chester County, and elsewhere, that suburban sprawl is a major threat to quality of life issues generally, and natural resources specifically. East Coventry has some protective measures in its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. However, there is need for a more comprehensive view toward resource protection. It is recommended that a Natural Features Overlay District be created within the Zoning Ordinance which would address the interrelationships between the various natural feature elements. Resources that would be included in such a district might include floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, riparian buffer areas, soils stabilization, stormwater management, and steep slope preservation. Such an overlay district should encompass not only standards for disturbance where permitted, but also land uses permitted in specific circumstances.

Recognizing that the greatest threat to natural resources is the uncontrolled spread of new development, often residential development, the Township needs to take measures to manage its growth. Several recommendations can be made in this case. Defined growth areas should be adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan that prescribe specific locations that have adequate infrastructure conditions to support concentrations of development. Conversely, growth areas should not contain significant natural features on which the Township has placed a high value. Adequate infrastructure implies the presence of suitable highway capacity within the context of the regional system and suitable conditions for community-scale sewage treatment and domestic water. This element leads to a recommendation that future growth be accommodated at a greater density than has been customarily found in the Township. Sometimes called cluster development, small lots for single and attached housing are utilized in exchange for significant amounts of required open space. Ideally, the resulting areas of open space can be planned so as to



relate to nearby preserves, resulting in a network of open space serving all the residents of the Township. A program of growth management has the potential to be highly beneficial to the preservation of the Township's natural resources.

### Open Space Plan, 1992

East Coventry Township engaged the services of Rettew Associates, Inc., in the early 1990's and had prepared an Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, referred to as the Open Space Plan. The Open Space Plan was adopted by the Township in December of 1992. It is a thorough and complete analysis of the Township's resources and facilities relating to open space and recreation, as well as a proposal for future needs. Included are techniques and strategies for implementing proposals. This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will summarize the Open Space Plan and link it to the proposals of this Plan. It should be considered an element of the Comprehensive Plan, as it addresses many policies and procedures for the preservation of open space. Because of its age, the Township should consider updating the Open Space Plan during this planning period, or near the year 2005. The following paragraphs are condensed summaries of each part of the 1992 Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan:

#### Community Background Information

This section of the Open Space Plan offers a brief history of the Township, budget practices and a discussion of the organizational structure, including staff, departments, commissions, boards and committees. The existing land use pattern and Township demographics are established as the basis for planning for open space. Many of the elements of this section of the Open Space Plan are presented in detail in this Comprehensive Plan.

#### Philosophy, Goals and Objectives

"It is the philosophy of East Coventry Township to enhance the quality of life in the Township by preserving its natural resources and providing public recreation opportunities." This statement found in the Open Space Plan provides the guidance for its goals. The stated goals are as follows:

- Establish an open space system for the entire Township which preserves exceptional land and water resources for public passive

recreation, for conservation of unique scenic and historic areas, and for protection of wildlife habitats.

- Develop a park system, with an emphasis on passive recreation, that provides areas and facilities to meet the recreational needs of all Township residents and also preserves natural areas.
- Promote community involvement and increase public awareness of the value of open space, environmental resources, and recreation.
- Coordinate open space preservation and recreation initiatives with other agencies and neighboring municipalities.
- Expand the Township's park and recreation facilities and services utilizing effective administrative and fiscal planning.

For each of the goals, long-range objectives are presented which focus on specific actions to accomplish the goal. In this Comprehensive Plan, goals and objectives relating to all aspects of Township interest, including open space, are outlined in Chapter 5. Chapter 13, Implementation, reiterates those goals and objectives, but also includes a recommendation of implementation for each objective. Part of each recommendation is the establishment of a priority and the assignment of responsibility.

### Environmental Resources Plan

The largest of the Open Space Plan's sections addresses the inventory of natural resources, as well as existing and proposed strategies for their protection. Included are water resources, land resources, woodland resources, wildlife habitats, scenic, historic and cultural resources, and protected municipal lands. A comparison of the various resources within Township codes and ordinances was made, analyzing the degree to which the resources are impacted or protected by legislation.

This section also contains an evaluation of selected areas which are unique or threatened, an inventory of preservation techniques and a matrix of appropriate measures related to each area. Of primary importance to this Plan is the outline of preservation techniques. While this may not reflect a complete list of currently available measures, it does represent a comprehensive approach to open space protection. For that reason, it is warranted to reiterate them in this Chapter. The

"Preservation Techniques for Natural Areas and Open Space" are as follows:

- **Outright Acquisition** – Fee simple title acquisition for parcels where public access and use is intended. Complete control and responsibility for the property is gained.
- **Donations** – A technique that may be appropriate to some individuals for economic benefits of tax laws. The Heyser Tract was the result of such a process.
- **Easements** – Among the rights that apply to land are easements, which can be acquired without the fee simple acquisition of the entire parcel. This can be appropriate in situations where one aspect of a property is needed, such as a trail, but acquisition of the entire parcel is not warranted from a public use perspective.
- **Deed Restrictions** – Limiting or constraining various use factors on a parcel can be done by the owner applying restrictions to the deed of the property. This could be done to limit the types of use or to prohibit some activity, such as woodland clearing. The public sector could acquire a parcel, apply deed restrictions to it and then sell or lease the parcel with the restrictions.
- **Tax Incentives** – Land owners may wish to enter into agreements with the Township or the County in order to reduce property taxes, such as by limiting use to farmland, open space, forest reserve or water supply.
- **Installment Purchase** – This procedure allows a property to be sold with the agreement that a specified number of acres would be transferred per year. The owner is relieved of taxes after the initial sale, with an option to continue to occupy the land. Costs for land purchase are phased.
- **Lease/Option** – Negotiation of a long term lease, with an option to purchase, reduces the initial outlay of purchase funds, while gaining land use control over the property.
- **Purchase and Resale** – Outright purchase of a property for the purpose of applying restrictions to limit future use can be done, with the intent to resell the land. The land would return to the tax

rolls following resale and the burden of maintenance falls to the new owner.

- **Condemnation** – The right of eminent domain is a legal device that gives governmental jurisdictions the right to acquire a property, usually when all other means have failed, if it can be demonstrated that the acquisition has a clear public purpose. Condemnation involves the process of determining a fair market value through appraisals. The acquisition could be all the property rights or easements and leases.
- **Exchange of Land** – The exchange of properties where one of the parcels is publicly owned can benefit both owners when one parcel is in a conservation area and the other is in a development area. This procedure would require negotiation between the parties and compensations for uneven values.

The above techniques offer a wide and varied set of options to be used by a municipality to implement open space and recreation plans. They vary from the complete and total acquisition of a parcel, along with all of the obligations for maintenance. This technique has the negative feature removing the tax obligation from the property and lowering revenues to the municipality. Other methods which do not involve complete acquisition, such as the placement of restrictions on the property, offer limited, but sometimes effective, means toward open space preservation or public recreational use. There are also various Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance provisions that promote land use and growth management. Open space preservation can be a beneficiary of techniques like transferable development rights, overlay zoning, mandatory dedication of parkland and cluster development options. These provisions of the Township's ordinances are further discussed in Chapter 7, Land Use Plan, as growth management strategies.

### Plan Recommended Actions

The Open Space Plan identifies six areas that are classified as being critical open space areas. These areas are significant for their environmental characteristics, such as the presence of wetlands or woodlands, and are deemed worthy of preservation efforts by the Township. They have been generally located on Figure 3.9, Biotic and Scenic Resources.

1. Schoolhouse Road wetland
2. Pigeon Creek wetland

3. Old Schuylkill Canal wetland
4. Ebelhare Road woods
5. Sylvan woods
6. Coal basins

The Open Space Plan includes a matrix which relates preservation and conservation techniques with resource types. Not all resource preservation efforts are applicable to all preservation measures. However, the matrix is a valuable tool for the Township to identify appropriate techniques.

#### Park and Recreation Facility Analysis

Standards for park and recreation facilities have been promulgated by various organizations, addressing service areas, quantity of facilities, and design of facilities. The subject of service areas is closely related to the variety of jurisdictions that provide facilities. Public entities from the Federal government to local municipalities are all involved in providing parks for citizens. National Parks are most abundant in the western part of the country and none are found in Pennsylvania. There are several State parks in the region, including French Creek and Marsh Creek in Chester County and Evansburg in Montgomery County. These are all large scale parklands that serve a population greater than any one county. Warwick County Park, located in Warwick Township, is a 433 acre sub-regional park well within the service area of East Coventry Township. On a more local basis, there are community and neighborhood level parks provided by different jurisdictions, including municipalities, school districts, conservancies and other institutions.

Each of the above-referenced park types has an intended service area and population. These standards vary and are subjective in nature. However, Chester County has adopted standards in its 1992 Open Space and Recreation Study as follows:

Table 9.1

Chester County Park Standards

Park Type	Acreage Standard	Min. Size	Service Radius	Service Area, sq.mi.	Max. Popul.
Regional	20 ac/1000	1000 ac	30 mi/1 hr drive	2800	n/a
Sub-regional	8.5 ac/1000	100 ac	7.5 mi/15 min drive	177	100,000
Community	4.5 ac/1000	20 ac	2.5 mi/5 min drive	20	25,000
Neighborhood	3.5 ac/1000	5 ac	½ mi/12 min walk	1	5000

Note: ac/1000 = acres per 1000 population

Source: Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study, 1982

The above-reference study establishing standards for the County can be applied to the situation East Coventry Township. The population in the year 2000 was 4566 individuals. Community parkland standards call for 4.5 acres per 1000 population, or a need for 20.5 acres based on standards. The Heyser Tract is 32.6 acres in size, relatively flat and more than satisfies the parkland standard. But, the location of this property is in the northern portion of the Township and is not centrally located to the population. It is also in an area of commercially and industrially zoned land, raising land use compatibility issues. The Township currently owns a centrally located parcel at the Municipal Building which is about 15 acres in size, somewhat less than the standard. This would make a good location for a community scale park, although additional acreage should be sought adjacent or nearby.

Neighborhood park standards in the Township are being met, at least at the time of the Open Space Plan in 1992. The year 2000 population of 4566 yields a need for 16 acres, relative to the 29 acres of neighborhood parkland present. The situation would seem to be satisfactory, but the distribution of the neighborhood parks within the Township is not adequate. The Open Space Plan of 1992 divided the Township into five (5) districts, three (3) of which have no Township-owned parkland. One of the districts has almost five (5) times the land area recommended. Another factor is the lack of developed facilities at most of the sites.

There are also standards which address the numbers of facilities needed for a given population. For instance, the County standard for soccer fields is 0.5 fields per 1000 population, yielding a need for two (2) fields. There are none presently provided by the Township, however, there are two (2) on school district lands. There are similar standards for most recreational and sports

related facilities, either adopted by the County or national organizations, like the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Land acquisition and site development is a concern which the Township has been aware of and is trying to correct. From a financial perspective, limited funds are available to solve the situation quickly, but long term budget practices, such as a Capital Improvement Program, can accomplish the goal of matching open space and recreation needs with current and future populations. The Open Space Plan of 1992 makes many recommendations for the acquisition, development and maintenance of parkland throughout the Township. A continuing and proportional expenditure of funds should occur for efforts to preserve open space and provide active and passive open spaces for Township residents.

### Recreation Programs

A variety of programs exist for the benefit of Township residents. These programs are provided by many different organizations in a wide variety of facilities. Programs range from adult education classes to youth sport activities. In some cases, a building is required, often in the evening hours, and school buildings satisfy this need very well when they are made available. Organized team sports for all age groups either require developed ball fields or courts or gymnasiums. These facilities can be publicly owned by municipalities, school districts, churches or other institutions. Along with the need for facilities is a need for organization, supervision and maintenance. It is conceivable that a municipality could attempt to provide every type of recreational facility and every type of program, both according to accepted standards. This would probably be prohibitively expensive and not necessarily useful. It is more common for a municipality to survey the interests and needs of its residents and establish the facilities and programs suitable and feasible. It is often possible to economize by developing facilities that have more than one purpose. Sharing facilities with other organizations and jurisdictions can more efficiently utilize resources.

### Funding

Knowing what facilities and programs are necessary to protect open space and provide recreation is only the first step in the realization of an Open Space Plan. Funding for planning, acquisition, site development, program management and maintenance are critical and ongoing elements. The Open Space Plan of 1992 discussed different strategies and they are summarized as follows:

- **User Fees and Charges** – This is a controversial topic in park and recreation management, in that there are many negative aspects to it that may offset the positive ones. By charging a fee for the use of a facility or attendance at a program, the Township may be limiting those who can afford to participate, selecting programs that make money, or competing with the private sector for commercial recreation business. Residents often feel that their taxes should allow their use of municipal facilities and programs. The charging of fees provides fiscal accountability and is a way of controlling attendance, while offsetting operating and maintenance costs.
- **Rental Fees** – This technique is similar to user fees, but usually applies to the exclusive use of a facility, such as pavilion or garden plots, for a given time period.
- **Sales Revenue** – Concessions and other forms of retail associated with park facilities and events can be used to generate revenue.
- **Financial Support from Area Businesses** – Allowing local businesses to sponsor activities or areas in exchange for some visible recognition is a way to relate commercial retail and service businesses to the community at large. Sponsorship could be recognized by signage or brochure advertising for funding specific programs or facilities.
- **Public Funding Sources** – There are numerous grant and funding opportunities available from the County, State and Federal governments, as well as other institutions and foundations. Locating these sources, determining eligibility, preparing applications, monitoring programs, and maintaining financial reports can be an overwhelming task for a municipality with limited staff resources. There is usually some form eligibility requirement and accountability for a grant, but the benefits of using funds outside normal revenue sources can be beneficial. Awareness of available grants should be an ongoing part of the management of the Township. Municipalities larger than East Coventry Township may have an individual assigned to the task of monitoring grant applications.

### Recommendations of the Open Space Plan of 1992

The Plan focuses on two areas of concern. There are recommendations for site improvements and land additions to properties the Township owns and offer recreational opportunities to residents. Secondly, there are recommendations for environmental resource protection and preservation. Lands associated with



these resources are typically of value for environmental purposes and may offer some passive recreational opportunities.

Land acquisition and development plans are highlighted in detail in the Open Space Plan of 1992. Specifically, improvements to Towpath Park, the Wade Tract and Heyser Park are outlined with recommended master planning, facility development, and in some cases, additional acreage recommendations. Cost estimates for all elements were presented, representing values at the time. Upgrades to the Municipal Building property were emphasized and represented the largest single cost proposal. Given previous discussion of the value of its central location and good accessibility, this site should continue to receive emphasis as a community park for the Township. Additional acreage has been acquired since the preparation of the 1992 Plan which should serve the communities needs for many years.

Neighborhood parks are generally smaller and locally oriented. Despite the presence of regional and community parks, there is still a need for neighborhood parks. Each park type satisfies different needs of the population. It is not uncommon for neighborhood parks to be provided by developers when new housing plans are approved, in satisfaction of mandatory dedication requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. In these cases, the required open space is designated on the land development plan and can be made up of both constrained lands and areas that are suitable for recreational development. It is possible to use the plan review process to identify and set aside areas that are environmentally sensitive natural areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and riparian buffers. Most ordinances contain provisions that require that a percentage of required open space be developable for ball fields and other facilities. In cases where the approval of a land development plan is a Conditional Use, such as cluster housing or planned unit developments, the municipality has the ability to require that the developer provide the actual facilities, on an agreed upon schedule. Upon completion of the project or some other specified time, the parkland and its facilities are conveyed to the municipality or to some other organization, such as a homeowners maintenance association. This procedure not only provides the Township with a distributed system of neighborhood parks, but it also does so with the cost being part of the land development, much like other site development infrastructure. Another feature of this process is that the Township has the opportunity to determine the location of open space and may be able to assemble larger areas by combining required lands from one development with those of an adjacent one.

The Township should review its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance regularly to insure that provisions for the dedication of

open space are appropriate and effectively preserving environmentally sensitive areas and providing the neighborhood parks needs of residents.

### Greenways

Greenways are a form of open space that are distinctly different than the types of parkland previously discussed in this Chapter. Essentially, they are corridors of limited width that originate and terminate at some feature, providing a linear experience associated with hiking, cycling or, in some cases, equestrian activities or recreational off-road vehicles. Greenways are connectors, serving both residents and wildlife. Natural greenways can provide wildlife with the ability to move from one area to another in an otherwise developing community. The establishment of trails through tracts of public lands has been common on a large scale for many years, however, the establishment of greenways on a more local level is a recent trend. The value of greenways can be recreational, preservation/conservation oriented or transportation related, or all of these. See Figure 10.1 for mapping of potential greenway locations associated with stream valleys and utility corridors.

From a regional perspective, greenways can link significant focal points separated by great distances or provide something as local as a walkway from a neighborhood to the local school. Regionally, there are great opportunities to utilize systems of land corridors as greenways. Abandoned railroad lines have been converted to greenway trails on a nationwide basis through a program known as "Rails to Trails". Many open space and conservation organizations have taken part in acquiring the right to use old rail lines and developing and maintaining such systems. Other regional systems can provide similar opportunities. Utility rights-of-way offer linear opportunities for greenways as well. Other corridor forms that are commonly part of greenway systems are stream or river banks, canal alignments and hedge rows. An issue that comes to the forefront is ownership and the ability to acquire rights to these lands. Especially on utility lands and railroads, negotiating access or acquisition of corridors can be difficult and lengthy. East Coventry Township, by virtue of its rural character, has an extensive network of equestrian trails, all of which are privately owned.

There are many opportunities for greenways to be established on corridors that are in the quasi-public sector. There are miles of utility rights-of-way in the Township, which traverse it into the adjacent municipalities. There is the abandoned Schuylkill Branch Railroad line in the northern sector, parallel to the Schuylkill River. The stream valleys of the River and Pigeon Creek are also regionally oriented. Although the strongest attribute of a greenway is its linear

character, planners should not overlook ways to interconnect greenways, creating loops for circuitous trips.

### Summary

East Coventry Township has the ability to retain, preserve and conserve its open spaces. It is those open spaces, in concert with an extensive agricultural land use pattern, that has given the Township its rural character. Often considered secondary to active recreational facilities, the identification and preservation of critical environmental areas is extremely important in planning for open space. Degradation and erosion of such features is not only environmentally damaging, but can also be a cause of image decline. Not that the Township is seeking to market that image to expand its population, but it should recognize that its character is what makes living in East Coventry Township unique.

The Township has provided for many of the recreational needs of its residents. Through regional and local facilities and programs there are a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Monitoring the way in which its land development ordinances impact open space should be continuous. Emphasis should be placed on the preservation of natural features and enhancing their accessibility for public use when appropriate. Satisfying the recreational and program needs of the community also requires ongoing surveying of attitudes and trends.

## CHAPTER 10

## TRANSPORTATION

### Act 209 Land Use Assumptions Report

East Coventry Township has recently prepared and adopted an Act 209 Land Use Assumptions Report, dated July 18, 2001. The report was prepared in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, which authorizes municipalities to assess development impact fees for transportation improvements. Road classifications were described, existing land uses quantified and future land development projected. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Land Use Assumptions Report, as periodically updated, be incorporated by reference.

Road classifications are discussed in the Report, with the assignment of arterial, collector or local access designations to the existing road network. The following material expands upon the Report and provides comparison to surrounding municipalities in the region.

### Existing Road Network

The road pattern within the Township has been described previously as being primarily rural, with two State routes traversing it. The following chart provides those road segments for which the State has traffic counts:

Table 10.1  
Daily Traffic Volume Estimates

<u>Road</u>	<u>Limits</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Daily Volume</u>
PA 23	Bethel Rd/Sheeder Rd	2002	6194
PA 724	PA 422/Sanatoga Rd	2002	14,316
PA 724	Sanatoga Rd/Bethel Rd	2002	13,794
Bethel Church Rd.	PA 724/Stony Run Rd	2002	1548
Bethel Church Rd.	Stony Run Rd/PA 23	2002	1342
Cedarville Rd.	Keim Rd/Schoolhouse Rd	2002	1306
Cedarville Rd.	Schoolhouse Rd/Sanatoga	2002	790
Ellis Woods Rd.	Old Schuylkill/Schoolhouse	2002	3153
Ellis Woods Rd.	Schoolhouse Rd/Creamery	2002	1032
Ellis Woods Rd.	Creamery/PA 23	2002	826
Sanatoga Rd.	Cedarville Rd/PA 724	2002	1032

Source: Chester County Planning Commission, Daily Traffic Volume Estimates for 2002

The sources of the traffic volume data are varied and are considered estimates because the actual figure reported may have been determined from an actual 24 hour count, counts from several days averaged into one day, or an average factored according to the time of year. Because many factors can affect the actual count on a given day, such as weather, day of the week, time of year, road construction or detours, it is recommended that the figures be used only for generalized purposes. The Chester County Planning Commission performs a valuable service in assembling the data and periodically updating it with factors reflecting County transportation growth rates. For specific interests, such as the review of a proposed development project, a traffic study should be designed and carried out that addresses all of the variables associated with the proposal and the existing road network, including current traffic counts.

Traffic volumes within the Township are varied and predictable. Route 724 is carrying more than 14,000 vehicles a day, many of which are on trips that neither originated nor ended in East Coventry Township. That is a significant volume of traffic for a Minor Arterial classified as carrying "very few through trips". Its daily traffic volume is, however, within the range (5000 to 20,000 ADT) appropriate for its classification. The affect on the community from such a volume of through traffic can be considerable. Noise and congestion during peak hours of the morning and evening impact on adjacent properties and on residents who are part of the traffic volume. Route 23 is also a Minor Arterial, but carries far less volume, according to the reported count in 2000. The difference in these two roads is due to the distance from an urban concentration. Even though Routes 23 and 724 merge in East Pikeland Township, just west of Phoenixville, Route 724 traverses the northern part of the County parallel to the Schuylkill River and provides easy access to Pottstown. Route 23 tends to traverse the more rural areas of nearby townships and East Coventry.

Another aspect of vehicular roads is a comparison between the extent of State roads and Township roads. The combination of the two types into all public roads can then be related to the area of the municipality to yield a road density calculation. These figures are available from several sources and provide an interesting observation of the road pattern regionally. The Regional Land Use Plan of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities included a table of these statistics, based on a 1986 study. The following table uses updated data to provide the comparison.

Table 10.2

Road Mileage Data

Municipality	Area (sq. mi.)	Municipal Road Miles	State Road Miles	Road Density*
Northern Federation	110.39	268.68	137.39	3.69
<b>East Coventry</b>	<b>11.25</b>	<b>42.00</b>	<b>12.22</b>	<b>4.82</b>
East Nantmeal	17.25	28.47	15.48	2.55
East Pikeland	8.78	33.52	13.86	5.40
East Vincent	13.59	32.54	19.96	3.86
North Coventry	13.14	38.72	24.11	4.78
South Coventry	7.81	14.83	9.12	3.07
Spring City	0.91	10.36	1.39	12.91
Warwick	19.08	27.82	22.41	2.63
West Vincent	18.58	39.92	19.77	3.21

Sources: Municipal Area: Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, Regional Land Use Plan, 1996.  
Road Mileage: The Chester County Association of Township Officials 2001 Township Directory.

\* Road Density expressed in total road miles per square mile of municipal area.

An analysis of the above table is difficult due to the presence of the Spring City statistics, which are the product of its compact, urban situation. Factoring out the data from Spring City so as to be able to compare the townships on an equal basis should be done, with no intended slight to the Borough. Of the townships, East Coventry Township has the greatest length of municipal road miles of all of the member municipalities and is near the least amount of State road miles. Correspondingly, its road density of 4.82 miles of road per square mile of area is similar to North Coventry Township and second only to East Pikeland Township in terms of density of roads. This is somewhat surprising given the relatively rural character of the Township. It suggests that the large number of municipal roads are serving a well distributed array of land parcels throughout the township. Along with this statistical analysis comes the obligation on the part of the Township to maintain a lengthy system of local

roads. More will be presented on this subject in Chapter 11, Municipal Finances, but it is important to recognize the magnitude of the network in East Coventry Township.

### Road Conditions

The Township's roads, like those of any similar municipality, are subject to constant use and, therefore, deterioration. With this comes safety issues, capacity problems and access management problems. The Northern Federation Land Use Plan itemized the various situations generally for all of the member municipalities, but it included only higher classification roads, such as expressways, arterials and collectors. The inventory does serve to point out the ongoing process of road maintenance and traffic growth. The information source for the inventory was a 1986 Highway Needs Study prepared by the Chester County Planning Commission, soon to be updated. Although this information is somewhat dated, the situations on the major roads continue. For instance, Route 724, Route 23 and Bethel Church Road are all indicated as having access management problems. This situation arises when there is a conflict between the need to maintain mobility on a road segment and need to provide access from adjacent land uses. Frequently, safety concerns arise and congestion results. This need not be a constant situation, but may expand during peak commuting times during the morning and evening. Route 23 and Bethel Church Road are further identified as having capacity problems, caused by the volumes being experienced exceeding the design capacity of the road. Several maintenance questions were also cited, in this case referring to highway bridges over two portions of Pigeon Creek.

As mentioned, roads are the subject of constant maintenance. The State is responsible for maintaining the roads noted earlier as experiencing problems. Every other year the Chester County Planning Commission assembles a Highway Improvements Inventory from data supplied by PennDOT which outlines the highway related improvement projects by road type. The inventory spans a twelve year period and includes cost estimates and time schedules. The current inventory was prepared in 1999 and is due to be revised soon. The following table is an excerpt from that Inventory as it relates to projects in East Coventry Township. As it is updated, this information should be modified.

Table 10.3

Highway Improvements Inventory

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Type</u>
Halteman Rd. over Pigeon Cr.	Bridge Replacement
Baptist Church Rd. over Pigeon Cr.	Bridge Replacement
Bethel Church Rd: PA 724/PA 23	Safety Improvements
PA 23: Bethel Church/Fulmer	Safety Improvements
Sanatoga Rd: Cedarville/Old Schuylkill	Safety Improvements

Source: Chester County Planning Commission

This table contains two bridge replacement projects and three safety improvement projects, all of which have not been funded or scheduled. They appear on the 1999 adopted Twelve Year Program and may move into a funded status in time. The Chester County Planning Commission recommends priorities and scheduling to PennDOT, but in these cases, there have been no funds appropriated or schedules created. CCPC suggested that the Halteman Road Bridge be scheduled for 5 to 8 years into the 12 year projection, with the other 5 projects recommended for 9 to 12 years. The FY 2003 – 2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of DVRPC contains no projects for that period in East Coventry Township. The TIP reviewed was scheduled to be adopted in June, 2002.

Regional Roads

There are several roads that have a more regional role than the local roads. While not located in East Coventry Township, PA 100 is a principle arterial highway that is oriented north-south and passes through North Coventry Township, connecting Wilmington, West Chester, Pottstown and Allentown. PA 100 is accessible to East Coventry at its intersection with Rt. 724 in North Coventry and also by Bealer Road, which forms the westernmost corner of the Township.

Another regional road, Rt. 724 (also known as Schuylkill Road), a minor arterial, passes through the northern sector of the Township, essentially paralleling the Schuylkill River on its south side. This road connects Phoenixville and Reading. Pottstown is the nearest urban center for most residents of East Coventry and Rt. 724 would be traversed at some point on the way there.



A third road with regional significance is Rt. 422, known as the Pottstown Bypass, which is primarily located in Montgomery and Berks Counties, but crosses the Schuylkill River twice on the northern border of North Coventry Township, immediately south of Pottstown. Rt. 422 is classified as a freeway or expressway in this location and connects Norristown and Reading to Pottstown. Access to Rt. 422 is by its interchange with Rt. 724, immediately west of the Township's northwest corner.

Each of these roads provides regional access to various destinations, but primarily for residents of the northern sector of East Coventry Township. Most of the township population resides in this area. It is also the area served by public utilities, which when combined with a regional road network, contributes to it being the preferred area for future growth. The southern and more rural sector of the Township is served by a more locally-oriented road network. Many of those roads feed into Rt. 23, Ridge Road, which passes through the southern area, generally east-west in orientation.

#### Transportation Alternatives

Given the relatively low population density of East Coventry Township, there are only limited opportunities for transportation modes other than the automobile. For systems of mass transit, such as bus or train, to function efficiently, there need to be a critical mass of riders within a convenient distance of stops or stations. Currently, there is neither service in the vicinity, but, should such bus transit service develop in the future, one likely stop would be the Lutheran Tipton Manor House located on Route 724 at Old Schuylkill Road.

Long range planning has occurred for a rail system called Schuylkill Valley Metro that would utilize existing rail lines along the Schuylkill River, including nearby Pottstown in Montgomery County. Should this system materialize, it is logical to presume that a station would be located in Pottstown that would provide rail service to Philadelphia and points in between. Estimates are that it could be 5 to 6 years before such a system is initiated, and the reality could be much longer. East Coventry Township has taken on the appearance of a bedroom community in recent decades, and the establishment of a commuter rail system nearby could only further reinforce such a trend.

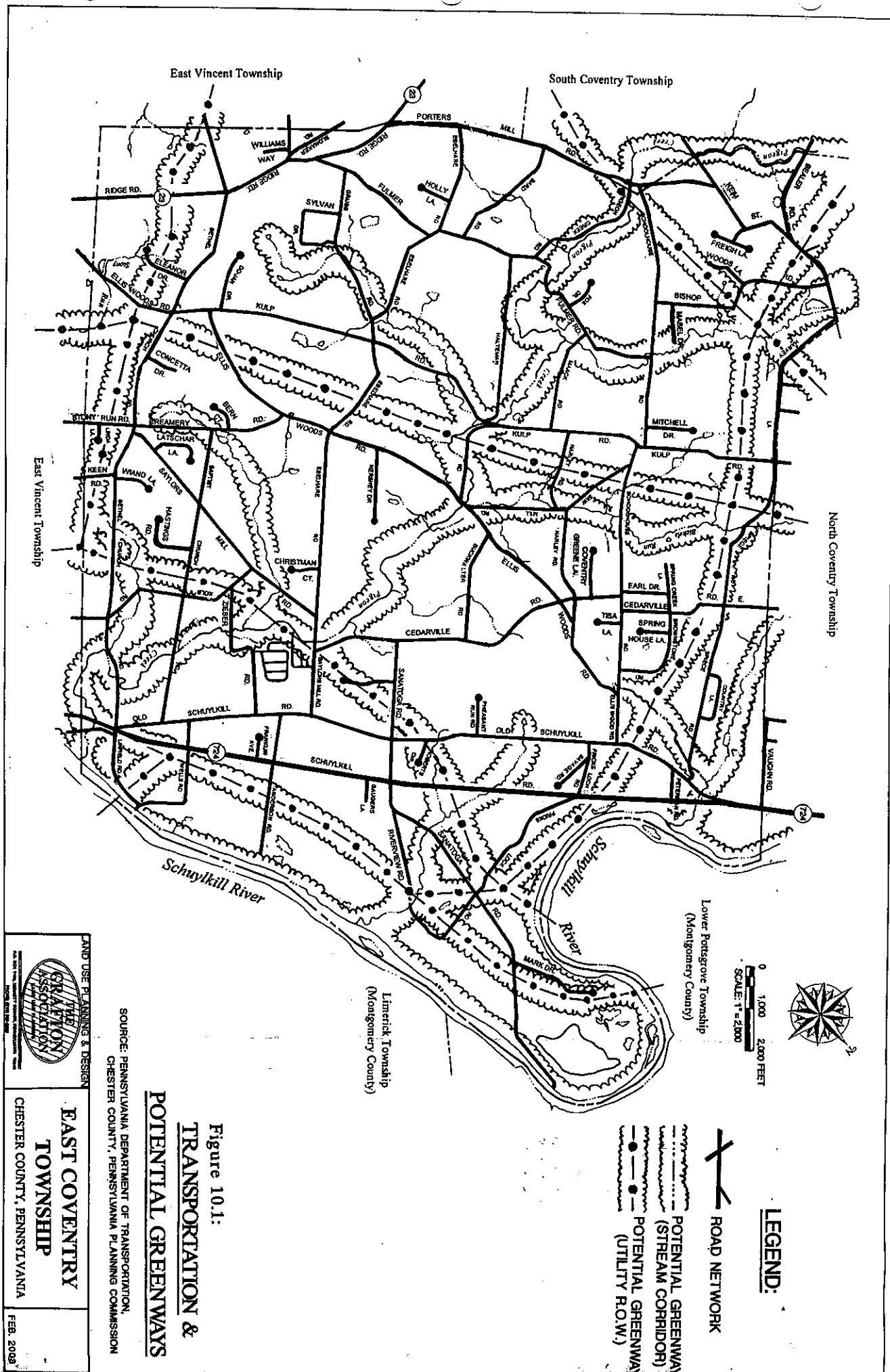
Another alternative to commuters driving their own vehicles to and from employment centers daily is the ability to car pool or park and pool. The infrastructure for such a system would involve locating and maintaining strategically placed parking lots where commuters could leave a vehicle. Such facilities would need to be safe and convenient, located along or near commuter routes. Further, there would need to be a program established that allows

potential users to learn of each others interests. Traditionally, this type of program is administered by a Transportation Management Agency (TMA), a quasi-public, regionally oriented organization charged with developing programs aimed at reducing the dependency on the automobile. Often, a TMA is supported financially by large local employers and public funds. In lieu of a TMA, a regional planning organization could dedicate part of its function to such a task.

The use of non-motorized transportation is another means of commuting or traveling to other destinations. In order for walking or bicycling to be a viable mode, several factors need to be present. The distance to destinations needs to be short enough to encourage motorists to become pedestrians or cyclists. Secondly, there need to be safe and efficient surfaces available, such as dedicated trails and walks. Key to the success of such a system are the presence of destinations within convenient distances. Parks, schools, libraries, local retail services, and other institutions are examples of destinations other than employment centers. East Coventry Township has very few such destinations, being primarily a low density residential community from which residents leave for many of their needs. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to identify situations where non-motorized transportation would be appropriate, including recreational uses. Hiking and bicycling are very popular activities which the Township should encourage by providing trails that would link residential areas with local and regional parklands, as well as other destinations. Additional discussion about greenways, was presented in the Open Space Plan, Chapter 9. In addition, see **Figure 10.1** for illustration of potential greenway locations.

On a regional scale, there is a currently funded project to extend the Schuylkill River Trail from its present terminus at Betzwood, Valley Forge National Historical Park, to the Berks County border. This trail is for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians. The new section is planned to be a 12 foot wide paved section with grass shoulders. Funding for design is scheduled for FY 2005 and construction in FY 2006. Its precise location is pending the design phase.

Within East Coventry Township is the original alignment of a portion of a Schuylkill River Canal and its associated tow path. The Township owns a municipal park at this location known as Towpath Park, an example of how an historic site may also function as an integral part of the proposed Schuylkill River Trail system.



**Figure 10.1:**  
**TRANSPORTATION & POTENTIAL GREENWAYS**

SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,  
 CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA PLANNING COMMISSION

**EASTERN PIEDMONT ASSOCIATION**

**LAND USE PLANNING & DESIGN**

**EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP**

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

FEB. 2008

### Summary

The transportation network in East Coventry Township is composed almost entirely of local and regional roads, designed to provide access to properties for motorized vehicles. This is not unexpected in a low density residential community. The density of the road network suggests a well distributed pattern of development. The proximity of several State routes and nearby urban areas, such as Pottstown, suggests that the area will continue to grow in population base as its desirability as a bedroom community continues. With that will come increased demands on the road network. The Township is encouraged to seek ways to encourage alternatives to the single passenger automobile in order to increase the efficiency of the road network and improve air quality.

Coordination with surrounding municipalities should occur routinely. Communities in both the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission and the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities play a large role in the transportation needs of East Coventry Township. The Township should continue to participate in all forums which offer opportunities to address regional transportation problems and solutions.

## **CHAPTER 11      MUNICIPAL FINANCES**

The management of the fiscal health of any municipality is one of the most important functions performed by officials for the residents. In East Coventry Township, this is done by the Board of Supervisors, with the assistance of various staff and consultants. The ability to provide the services needed to maintain the health, safety and welfare of residents and businesses is integral to the basic functioning of the Township. The fiscal management involved includes the collection of revenues from a variety of sources, the expenditure of funds to achieve stated goals of the municipality and the retention of funds to be available as a reserve. Given the importance of these functions to the stability of the Township, it is important to include this chapter in the Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the revenues and expenditures over the five year period from 1996 to 2000, years for which State-required Annual Audit reports are available. Those Audit Reports are the source of all financial data discussed in this Chapter. Of interest are comparisons within one category over the time period. These trends provide insight into the changing levels of funding and the ways in which the Township chooses to expend its resources. It is also useful to note the proportion of any one category to the total available, be it a revenue fund or an expenditure. The percentages provided offer a view of the emphasis placed on any category relative to the total available.

### **General Fund**

The General Fund of East Coventry Township is comprised of numerous funding sources, most of which are taxes and fees legislated by the Board of Supervisors. Table 11.1, Revenue, General Fund, 1996 – 2000, provides an accounting of the amounts received from each source and they are listed as follows:

- Real Estate Tax
- Per Capita Tax
- Real Estate Transfer Tax
- Earned Income Tax
- Licenses and Permits
- Fines and Forfeits
- Interest and Rent
- Intergovernmental Revenue
- Charges for Services

Table 11.1

East Coventry Township

Revenue, General Fund, 1996 - 2000

Year	Total	Real Estate Tax		Per Capita Tax		R.E. Transfer Tax		Earned Income Tax		Licenses & Permits		Fines & Forfeits	
		Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
1996	\$ 696,146	\$170,182	24.4%	\$29,912	4.3%	\$ 35,909	5.2%	\$337,744	48.5%	\$ 14,397	2.1%	\$ 12,959	1.9%
1997	\$ 681,732	\$170,935	25.1%	\$31,394	4.6%	\$ 42,765	6.3%	\$340,977	50.0%	\$ 18,981	2.8%	\$ 9,731	1.4%
1998	\$ 1,005,044	\$171,393	17.1%	\$30,426	3.0%	\$ 84,185	8.4%	\$391,523	39.0%	\$ 21,643	2.2%	\$ 19,467	1.9%
1999	\$ 979,335	\$190,956	19.5%	\$24,484	2.5%	\$ 65,240	6.7%	\$400,278	40.9%	\$ 23,235	2.4%	\$ 17,488	1.8%
2000	\$ 1,141,838	\$174,992	15.3%	\$29,054	2.5%	\$ 75,911	6.6%	\$444,985	39.0%	\$ 25,750	2.2%	\$ 18,358	1.6%

Year	Interest & Rent		Intergov. Revenue		Charge for Services		Miscellaneous		Other	
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
1996	\$ 4,804	0.7%	\$ 7,514	1.1%	\$ 19,636	2.8%	\$ 53,330	7.7%	\$ 9,759	1.4%
1997	\$ 5,594	0.8%	\$ 7,535	1.1%	\$ 13,954	2.0%	\$ 31,528	4.6%	\$ 8,338	1.2%
1998	\$ 13,666	1.4%	\$ 129,140	12.8%	\$ 38,827	3.9%	\$ 27,884	2.8%	\$ 76,890	7.7%
1999	\$ 21,729	2.2%	\$ 131,838	13.5%	\$ 21,333	2.2%	\$ 18,275	1.9%	\$ 84,479	6.6%
2000	\$ 24,452	2.1%	\$ 214,031	18.7%	\$ 168,268	14.7%	\$ 3,257	0.3%	\$ 85,793	7.5%

Source: Annual Audit and Financial Reports provided by East Coventry Township

- Miscellaneous
- Other

The largest of the funding sources is the Earned Income Tax applied to residents of the Township. It has averaged between 40% and 50% of the total General Fund during the five most recent reported years. The second largest source is that of Real Estate taxes, which has averaged between 15% and 25% of the General Fund. Each of these taxes has generally increased in amount during the period. This is reflective of the general increase in population, and the commensurate increase in housing. The following data illustrate the progressive increase in property assessment values during a period between 1998 and 2002, the most recent five year period:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Property Assessment Total</u>
1998	\$241,880,750.
1999	\$240,410,660.
2000	\$243,665,050.
2001	\$246,679,310.
2002	\$249,524,250.

Source: Township records

The above Township property assessment totals indicate a progressively increasing trend of property values in the Township. The Township has the authority to amend the tax rate on property, however this rate does not fluctuate often. The rate has remained at 0.75 mills in recent years, after an adjustment was made following 1997.

#### Liquid Fuels Fund

The State Liquid Fuels Fund is a governmental fund that provides significant revenues to municipalities in Pennsylvania. The Fund was authorized in 1956 by Act Number 655 (P.L. 1944). A portion of the State fuel taxes paid on gasoline is returned to the municipalities in an annual allocation determined by a 50/50 formula based on the number of miles of official streets and population. The funds received from the State are required to be kept separate from other municipal funds for accounting purposes. These funds are designated to be used for highway and transportation related projects within the municipality's annual budget. The funds are not required to be spent immediately and can be accumulated to allow for large public works projects. Examples of the types of projects eligible for expenditure within the Liquid Fuels Fund are street cleaning, snow removal, traffic signals, street lighting, sidewalks, storm sewers, highway

construction and repair. The amounts reported as being received into the Fund are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Liquid Fuels Fund Allotment</u>
1996	\$93,222
1997	\$95,376
1998	\$121,496
1999	\$124,794
2000	\$109,248

### Expenditures

East Coventry Township, like all municipalities, exists in part to provide services in exchange for taxes to those who reside or own businesses within its boundaries. A wide variety of services are typically provided, usually on the basis of those functions deemed necessary for the orderly functioning of the Township, such as public safety and highway maintenance. Other services are those that residents desire, such as cultural and recreational programs and facilities. Table 11.2 illustrates the variety of expenditures and their relative magnitude over the five year period. Like the revenues totals, the expenditures of the Township have shown a general increase from almost \$800,000 in 1996 to \$1.4M in 2000. Various factors explain this increase, including inflation of costs, increased population, and demands for greater services from residents.

As is shown in Table 11.2, there are four areas of expense that are generally the major components of the expenditure budget. In order of magnitude for the year 2000, they are Public Works – Highways (30.4%), Public Safety (28.8%), Miscellaneous (18.3%), and General Government (16.5%). The largest of these expense categories, Public Works – Highways, includes the funds from the Liquid Fuels Fund, which makes up over half of the moneys available for general road and bridge maintenance and repair, as well as the upkeep of traffic control devices, storm sewers, tools and machinery. Public Safety includes funds for police services, and smaller amounts for fire protection, inspections, planning and zoning. Miscellaneous expenditures include items not easily allocated to other areas, such as intergovernmental expenses, insurance premiums, employee benefits, and many unspecified expenses. The General Government category contains expenses for such areas as the legislative/governing body, staff salaries, tax collection costs, consultant services, and costs related to the buildings of the Township. The remaining categories of expenses make up a minor portion of the overall annual budget. They are Health and Human Services, Culture and Recreation, Community Development, Debt Service, and Other (primarily Park Fund).



Table 11.2

East Coventry Township

Expenditures, General Fund & Liquid Fuels Fund, 1996 - 2000

Year	Total	General Government		Public Safety		Health & Human Serv		PW - Highways		Culture/Recreation		Community Dev't.		Debt Service		Miscellaneous		Other	
		Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
1996	\$ 795,379	\$162,568	20.4%	\$166,616	20.9%	\$ 1,750	0.2%	\$242,430	30.5%	\$ 6,197	0.8%	\$ 22	0.0%	\$ 38,820	4.9%	\$ 174,105	21.9%	\$ 2,871	0.4%
1997	\$ 814,724	\$227,189	27.9%	\$202,207	24.8%	\$ 1,750	0.2%	\$166,634	20.5%	\$ 9,282	1.1%	\$ 194	0.0%	\$ 38,820	4.8%	\$ 168,648	20.7%	\$ -	0.0%
1998	\$ 815,717	\$180,897	22.2%	\$220,209	27.0%	\$ 4,044	0.5%	\$184,244	22.6%	\$ 8,467	1.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 49,182	6.0%	\$ 168,674	20.7%	\$ -	0.0%
1999	\$ 754,202	\$189,027	25.1%	\$162,244	21.5%	\$ 1,865	0.2%	\$147,358	19.5%	\$ 42,982	5.7%	\$ 56	0.0%	\$ 53,966	7.2%	\$ 156,714	20.8%	\$ -	0.0%
2000	\$1,411,374	\$232,434	16.5%	\$405,867	28.8%	\$ 2,389	0.2%	\$428,703	30.4%	\$ 22,789	1.6%	\$ 13,864	1.0%	\$ 38,820	2.8%	\$ 258,180	18.3%	\$ 8,328	0.6%

Source: Annual Audit and Financial Reports provided by East Coventry Township

The expenditures enumerated above and in Table 11.2 would seem to represent a reasonable balance among the basic needs of the community. It should not be unexpected to find that public safety and highway infrastructure costs make up the two largest expenditures. They correspond to the essential requirements of most communities.

### Financial Planning

In the past the Township has prepared an annual budget reflective of revenues on hand and anticipated for the upcoming year. Routine operating costs which tend to be repetitive are projected in this way. However, capital costs for expenses such as land acquisition, development of public lands, or purchase of equipment can best be projected over a period of more than one year. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a budget of future years that can be as short as several years or as long as the planners wish to forecast. In reality, a CIP includes the upcoming year in addition to about five years beyond. This budgeting technique requires the municipality to project anticipated expenditures for land, development and equipment that generally have a life expectancy sufficiently long to not be considered an operating expense, or generally about ten years. Each year the CIP is refined for the nearest year, which becomes the annual budget, and a year is added to the end of the forecast. Obviously, the out-years are going to be based on less precise data than the near-years. As a planning tool, a CIP is invaluable as a means to prepare for the expenditure of funds in the future and to spread them out to avoid financial impact. In a sense, it encourages the municipality to project programs into the future to accommodate both growth and replacement needs.

East Coventry Township does not currently employ a Capital Improvement Program in its budgeting process. This Comprehensive Plan highly recommends that the Township adopt the practice of preparing and annually updating a CIP. It should be prepared during the same time period as the Annual Budget and should be subject to adoption by the Board of Supervisors annually.

Another aspect of financing future programs is the use of grants. Funds are available for a variety of purposes from organizations throughout the country, as well as the State and Chester County. Becoming aware of relevant grants and the application process can be time consuming and can be a somewhat specialized occupation. In the future, greater use of grants is encouraged to fund the Township's services to its residents.

### Summary

East Coventry Township has formulated annual budgets in the past which reflect the needs and costs associated with a relatively rural and low density population. The Township is in a sound financial setting. The financial practices employed in the past have met the purposes required, however, in the future, additional techniques should be employed. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) should be instituted immediately, even if it is simplistic. A CIP offers the Township an annual opportunity to forecast its needs into the future years. Further, additional use should be made of available grants.

## CHAPTER 12      PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIPS

One of the intentions of a Comprehensive Plan is the assurance that the planning goals, policies and programs of the municipality are consistent with other planning programs, both regional and local. In the case of East Coventry Township, examples of such planning programs are the Chester County Comprehensive Plan, "Landscapes", the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities Regional Plan, and the Township's Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan. This chapter will assess the relationships between those three plans and this Comprehensive Plan, with reference to Environmental, Socio - Economic, Economic and Regional planning implications.

### Environmental

East Coventry Township has mapped, in this Plan and other planning documents, areas of sensitive natural resources. These maps, as well as those that may be necessary for specific purposes in the future, are to be utilized by the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission in the decision making process of land use planning. Areas of the Township that are suitable for land development should arise from an analysis of natural areas, the intent being to minimize the impact upon such areas through land use management. It is the policy of the Township to protect its natural areas, while at the same time establishing areas that are suitable for future growth. In order to accomplish this, the Township has established the following policies:

- Support water conservation practices.
- Protect ground and surface water supplies.
- Prevent land disturbance in floodplains and wetlands.
- Promote education of water conservation and protection.
- Preserve and enhance buffer areas around water bodies to mitigate environmental and visual impacts.
- Preserve and protect large woodlands and woodland corridors for their contribution to wildlife habitat and scenic values.
- Promote soil conservation practices to reduce erosion and sedimentation in the region.

- Promote preservation of prime agricultural soils outside of the growth areas.

### Socio / Economic

East Coventry Township recognizes that growth will occur, both residential and non-residential. It will be the policy of the Township to direct such future growth as to location, as opposed to reacting to individual applications in an inconsistent manner. Housing needs of all types will be primarily satisfied with previously approved plans on lands designated by the Township as growth areas. In establishing areas for growth and by encouraging cluster type development the Township establishes consistency with both "Landscapes" and the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities Regional Plan. It is the intent of the Township to adopt the following policies regarding social issues:

- Designate adequate amounts of area to accommodate housing units in number and location consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
- Concentrate new housing within identified growth areas.
- Direct housing in rural landscapes to infill areas of existing developed areas.
- Promote adaptive reuse in village areas in order to retain those concentrations of development.
- Encourage land use regulations that allow for development of affordable housing.
- Promote efficiency in the development process to avoid unnecessary cost to housing.
- Encourage fair housing laws which prohibit discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.

### Economic Development

Within East Coventry Township currently there are minor opportunities for economic development initiatives. The Township is both a rural agricultural community and low density residential development. Local employment centers

are limited, with many residents commuting outside the Township to other localities, such as Pottstown, Phoenixville or the greater Philadelphia area. Many of the retail and service needs are also satisfied outside the Township. However, many local service providers do business within the Township and it is intended that a healthy economic atmosphere be retained where small businesses can operate. Such businesses are, and will most likely remain, of a low density in proportion to the population base of the Township. It is through such a balance that the rural character of the Township can best be preserved and enhanced.

In identifying the needs of the residents and local businesses, the Township can adopt policies that balance an interest in retaining a strong agribusiness community while providing for the needs of residential homeowners. In order to accomplish this, it is the intent of East Coventry Township to pursue the following:

- Identify the business and service needs of the residents, including needs related to the agriculture services sector.
- Recognize the important role home occupations play in the community and develop regulations accordingly.
- Encourage the centralization of business where appropriate for convenience and efficiency, promoting pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Promote buildings for retail and service centers that are architecturally compatible with the character of the Township and encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures.
- Maintain and improve the Township's road network to provide efficient movement of agricultural and other products, and meet the transportation needs of residents.

### Regional Relationships

East Coventry Township has established with this Comprehensive Plan a Land Use Plan and Growth Management Strategy that is consistent with the Chester County Comprehensive Plan, "Landscapes". The division of the Township into two sectors, Suburban to the north and Rural to the south, divided by a Natural corridor is consistent with the County's program of Livable Landscapes. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to support and enhance the County Plan. The same relationship applies to the Regional Land Use Plan of the Federation of

Northern Chester County Communities, of which East Coventry and nearby townships are members. The Township is also a member of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission, which is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan. With regard to consistency with these plans, it is the intention of the Township to adopt the following policies:

- Control sprawl development which has consumed vast amounts of land within Chester County.
- Encourage the regeneration of existing villages, and the re-creation of village style development.
- Preserve natural resources and farmland.
- Provide transportation options and reduction of traffic congestion.
- Acknowledge land use patterns in adjacent municipalities with the utilization of growth boundaries.
- Maintain a constant liaison with adjoining municipalities through participation in regional planning efforts, including the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission and other organizations.

### Summary

The plans and policies of East Coventry Township that relate to management of future growth and land use are those that will maintain a rural character in the Township while offering opportunities for growth for new residences and businesses. These objectives are consistent with those of regional plans that have been cited. The one over-riding goal of this Plan is the avoidance of sprawl development patterns which have become prevalent in more urbanized areas of the County. By virtue of being surrounded by other participating members of the Northern Federation, East Coventry Township is able to align its growth management strategies with other municipalities committed to the same regional goals.

## CHAPTER 13

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the East Coventry Township Comprehensive Plan, it is essential to establish a program for its implementation. The following is a schedule of recommendations linked to each objective of this plan. General priorities and responsibilities are established as well as references to the appropriate Township planning document(s). The priority levels established herein are as follows:

Immediate	As adopted in this Plan or occurring within a year of adoption.
Short term	2 to 3 years.
Mid term	3 to 5 years.
Long term	5 to 6 years
Ongoing	A recurring activity or undetermined.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**GOAL 1:** Delineation and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1.** Identify and delineate natural resources and develop regulatory measures to sustain them. Include floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, stream headwaters and buffers, slopes, ridgelines, woodlands, and critical wildlife habitat.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Using the Natural Resources Inventory and maps, prepare large scale, detailed maps for the use of developers, land owners and Township decision makers, showing all resources to be protected.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 1.2.** Regulate land development so as to protect and enhance sensitive natural areas, such as those in Objective 1.1.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop regulations to be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, including, but not



limited to, a resource protection overlay zoning district.  
Make appropriate changes to Zoning Ordinance to  
consolidated all resource regulations.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 1.3.** Regulate land uses in floodplains to protect water quality  
and stream bank stability.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Incorporate floodplain regulations  
into an overlay zoning district, so that when a use is  
permitted it has minimal impact upon the flood  
characteristics of the waterbody.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission and Township  
Engineer

**OBJECTIVE 1.4.** Regulate land uses on slopes greater than 15%, so as to  
minimize erosion, instability and subsidence.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Incorporate steep slope  
development regulations in an overlay zoning district, so  
that when a use is permitted, it has minimal impact upon  
the erosion potential and stability of the slope.  
Consideration should be given to methods to allow  
innovative solutions to site grading and architectural  
situations.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 1.5.** Require protection for existing significant trees and  
measures for replacement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop protective measures to be incorporated into the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance that would require a developer to inventory and protect significant plant materials, to be identified by species, size and location.

**PRIORITY:** Short term and Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**GOAL 2:** Identify historic resources and their surroundings in the Township and develop protective measures.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1.** Recognize the value of historic structures to the character of the Township landscape by inventorying all structures; residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural buildings, bridges, walls and other engineered structures.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Initiate a systematic and thorough inventory of all historic structures, to include use, ownership, style, condition, location, and National Register status. Floor plans, photographs and drawings should be included in the inventory.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Historical Commission, with assistance from Chester County.

**OBJECTIVE 2.2.** Develop protective measures to encourage preservation of historic structures.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop regulations as part of the Zoning Ordinance that have a review procedure for all plans relating to an historic structure or district.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors and the Historical Commission, with assistance from Chester County.

**OBJECTIVE 2.3.** Provide for adaptive reuses of historic structures compatible with the structure and the community.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Historical Commission should continually monitor the status of historic structures in the Township, so as to be able to assist an owner in appropriate conversion of uses, architectural renovations, and placement of tenants or owners in historic buildings.

**PRIORITY:** Mid term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Historical Commission

**OBJECTIVE 2.4.** Create inducements to encourage preservation, such as site plan modifications.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Township should adopt amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance that acknowledge the uniqueness of historic structures and permit modifications to site planning regulations where appropriate to preserve the original character of a structure. An example would be yard standards, home business opportunities, and sign requirements.

**PRIORITY:** Mid term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Historical Commission, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors, with assistance from Chester County.

## **OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION**

**GOAL 3.** Recognize the rural landscape to the Township by preserving areas significance for physical, cultural, recreational, and scenic qualities.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1** Identify elements of the rural landscape that are significant.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Inventory all elements of the rural landscape, such as agricultural lands and buildings, rural roads and trails, woodlands and other significant natural features and commit same to mapping.

**PRIORITY:** Short-term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 3.2** Develop plans and policies that preserve features while permitting sensitive development.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Evaluate and revise accordingly the Township Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to incorporate provisions that require each proposed site development to prepare a natural features site inventory. Develop site standards that preserve such features in exchange for density bonuses.

**PRIORITY:** Short-term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 3.3** Develop methods to protect and perpetuate especially critical areas, such as transfer of development rights and conservation easements.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Revise the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO regulations to encourage the transfer of development rights from a critical natural area to a receiving area already within an area capable of increased development due to available infrastructure.

**PRIORITY:** Short-term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 3.4** Identify scenic corridors and view-sheds and develop methods to protect same.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Inventory the scenic elements of the Township through field and map analysis, and revise Township s to consider these elements in the manner that natural features are preserved.

**PRIORITY:** Mid-term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

## **AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION**

**GOAL 4** Preserve agriculture as a valuable land use and industry which contributes to the character of the Township.

**OBJECTIVE 4.1** Identify classes and quality of agricultural soils and delineate agricultural zones.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Using soils maps and any other more definitive method, including reports from farmers, identify the most highly productive soils and relate the maps to the Township Zoning Map to insure consistency.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission with the assistance of Chester County and any local agricultural boards.

**OBJECTIVE 4.2.** Include agricultural preservation issues in the Township growth management strategies.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt land planning policies for long term use that recognize that agriculture is a viable land use and not a holding category to be converted to other future uses. Develop fiscal incentives to encourage

farms to be retained by local farmers and review land development standards to preclude conflicts between farm operations and suburban residential development.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 4.3.** Utilize available county, state and federal programs to preserve agricultural lands.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Township and its agricultural community should become aware of all programs which involve such techniques as purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, loans and technical assistance. Where necessary, amendments should be made to ordinances to accomplish these objectives. Participation in informational programs is encouraged for Township officials and the farming community.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission and local agricultural organizations and landowners.

**OBJECTIVE 4.4.** Educate Township residents on the role and needs of agriculture and its importance to the Township.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Agricultural and residential land uses often come into conflict over aesthetic issues. Efforts should be made to inform residents of the nature of the agricultural business, typical operations, and expected noises, smells, and appearances. This can be done through informational bulletins in a periodic newsletter. Emphasize the range of agricultural operations, from aqua-farming to horse farms. Promote community farming in common areas and the potential use of open space for some agricultural purposes. Develop strategies to assist farmers in retaining existing farms.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors

**LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL 5** Provide for Township growth consistent with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of current and future residents, while preserving significant community attributes.

**OBJECTIVE 5.1.** Strengthen concentrations of commercial activity, employment opportunities, institutions and residential variety to increase diversity, provide a sense of community and provide mixed use centers.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop land planning policies that direct new growth and expansions of existing development toward areas that already have such concentrations, in order to maximize use of infrastructure such as roads and utilities, to avoid sprawl, and to make access to the development convenient.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 5.2** Concentrate new residential development in suburban landscapes and locate employment centers to have adequate infrastructure and accessibility.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Where no precedent for similar growth exists in the area, develop land planning policies that concentrate uses in order to benefit from reduced infrastructure costs. Accessibility to the road system should also be concentrated for safety and efficiency purposes.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 5.3.** Support agricultural land uses while enhancing villages to accommodate future development.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop land planning policies that encourage the viability of villages as a compact and efficient form of development, thus reducing pressure on agricultural lands for development.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 5.4** Restrict development in areas with significant natural features.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop land use regulations that channel growth into designated areas with available infrastructure and away from areas with significant natural features.

**PRIORITY:** Short-term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 5.5.** Maintain an inventory of all Township land, including land cover, land use, natural resources, community facilities, historic resources, and scenic areas.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Township should prepare and maintain a mapping system that delineates all land use features. These maps become the primary planning resources for the Township in processing land development applications, but will also be used by potential developers. The value of the mapping is to have a detailed and thorough township-wide view of the patterns of use which make up the Township's character.

**PRIORITY:** Short term



**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission, with assistance from Chester County.

**OBJECTIVE 5.6.** Develop future growth strategies that recognize community values, infrastructure, services, and resources in order to guide growth while preserving significant Township qualities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan, review its contents periodically, and adopt amendments to it. Consider adjustments to the Plan on a five year basis or as conditions warrant.

**PRIORITY:** Mid term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and other appointed boards.

**OBJECTIVE 5.7** Concentrate growth near existing or planned patterns of development and infrastructure.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Capitalize on the investment in infrastructure by directing growth to those areas and minimize situations where infrastructure is developed for limited usage.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 5.8** Coordinate land use planning with adjacent municipalities and the County by participation in regional organizations, in order to consider impact on adjacent land uses.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Utilize all opportunities to coordinate with officials from adjacent and nearby townships and boroughs, especially those members of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities and the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission,

to insure that land use plans near the township boundaries are not in conflict with plans in the adjacent municipality. On a regional basis, participation should occur regarding transportation or environmental planning that may have even an indirect effect.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 5.9**      Develop methods to include home occupations as an important element of future Township growth.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recognize that in a rural community; it is often important to be able to use the residential property or the farm as a source of additional income, through home sales, offices and services. Consideration needs to be given to impact on the community, hours of operation, and extent of the use. Amend the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances as necessary.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**GOAL 6**      Provide for the transportation needs of residents and businesses with efficient and well maintained facilities.

**OBJECTIVE 6.1**      Evaluate transportation network for location, condition and capacity, and maintain an inventory of this information.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Institute procedures within the formal of the Act 209 Study to maintain a data base with Township and State road information that will allow for the preparation of repair schedules, budget preparation and coordination with PennDOT.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Transportation Advisory Committee

**OBJECTIVE 6.2**      Coordinate with PennDOT about local and regional highway improvements that will affect the Township.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Maintain and improve the relationship with PennDOT, by scheduling periodic meetings, assigning a specific contact person, and monitoring all communications from the State, including the PennDOT Internet Web site.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Township Manager

**OBJECTIVE 6.3**      Encourage the use of non-motorized transportation modes, such as walking and bicycling.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Provide facilities such as dedicated bicycle lanes and paths, sidewalks and trails that will allow for safe and convenient access to retail services, institutions and community facilities from residential districts. Consider developing connections between open space and recreation areas.

**PRIORITY:** Immediate

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 6.4**      Encourage the development and use of mass transit systems where appropriate, both locally and regionally.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Coordinate with PennDOT and regional planning agencies regarding land planning practices which support mass transit and the potential for multi-modal systems which would serve the residents of the

Township. Consider park and ride facilities to interface with mass transit.

**PRIORITY:** Short-term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Transportation Advisory Committee

**OBJECTIVE 6.5** Evaluate Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for compatibility of proposed development with road capacity standards.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Revise SALDO regulations to match development density to the design capacity of the road providing access. Prohibit the ability of a developer to upgrade a limited section of road to over-develop a site without addressing regional impact to roads. This procedure will maintain the continuity of the road network and will preserve the rural road characteristics.

**PRIORITY:** Immediate

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 6.6** Develop a plan to project transportation improvement projects into the future, with emphasis on reinforcing a hierarchy of transportation types.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Forecast the need for new road construction and road repairs into future years, through the use of a Capital Improvement Program. Consider all forms of transportation, from the pedestrian sidewalk to the major arterial. Identify links that need to be made to connect various portions of the system with the appropriate level of right-of way.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Transportation Advisory Committee, Board of Supervisors

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**GOAL 7** Provide for Township public facilities and services for current and future development consistent with projected growth.

**OBJECTIVE 7.1.** Develop an integrated Facilities and Services Plan providing opportunity for future growth and related facility needs, including utilities, human services, public health, and economic development, consistent with anticipated growth.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Township should create such a plan that would inventory all existing facilities and current services, identify unmet needs of residents and businesses; and make proposals to be considered as part of the future budgeting process. Facilities and services may not always occur within the Township. The Plan should be an advisory resource for planning purposes.

**PRIORITY:** Long term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors.

**OBJECTIVE 7.2.** Identify areas available for future community facility needs and develop timetables and strategies for acquisition.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Utilizing the Facilities and Services Plan, land needed to accommodate future community facilities, such as parks or utility structures, should be identified as early as possible, for budgeting and acquisition. The advantage is to be able to locate such facilities appropriately and to acquire land at a reasonable price.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Committee, Board of Supervisors.

**OBJECTIVE 7.3.** Identify, evaluate, and monitor regional services for residents and businesses.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Because of relatively low population density and many services being provided outside the Township, efforts should be made to be aware of ongoing and proposed programs, services and activities occurring regionally that would be of interest and importance to the residents and business owners. An example is the regional school district and its programs. A means to communicate the information to the residents, such as a newsletter, is desirable.

**PRIORITY:** Long term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors

**OBJECTIVE 7.4.** Develop a long term solid waste management plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Township needs to monitor costs associated with current private solid waste removal. A long range plan for such services should be prepared that evaluates the various means of removal available. As the Township's residential and non-residential base increases in the future, alternatives, such as recycling, should be examined and plans made accordingly.

**PRIORITY:** Long term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors

**OBJECTIVE 7.5.** Coordinate with state and regional emergency service providers, including police, fire, emergency health and disaster relief, for service to residents of the Township.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Maintain routine close contact with appropriate service providers through periodic meetings and communications in order to inform residents and employees within the Township of procedures for utilizing such services.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Township Manager.

## **HOUSING**

**GOAL 8** Provide for the preservation and maintenance of the existing housing stock and future development for Township growth.

**OBJECTIVE 8.1** Adopt and maintain recognized Statewide building code and provide consistent enforcement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Nationally recognized building codes, adapted for local conditions, should be adopted and maintained in updated form. Consistent and thorough enforcement should occur for all new construction, and a program of routine inspections developed for existing structures, especially for places of public assembly.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors

**OBJECTIVE 8.2.** Require a high level of structural and property maintenance for aesthetic and public safety reasons.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue to enforce the BOCA Property Maintenance Code which prescribes standards of maintenance for all structures and properties, addressing such issues as outdoor storage, trash on properties, health and safety problems, landlord responsibilities, and penalties.

**PRIORITY:** Long term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL 9** Insure the current and continuing financial integrity of the Township, utilizing accepted techniques for operational budgets and Capital Improvement Programming to support services and facilities.

**OBJECTIVE 9.1** Prepare annually a Capital Improvement Program to fund facilities, equipment, maintenance, and programs.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Routinely develop a capital budget for the upcoming year and a capital program for the five years beyond. The program should reflect anticipated needs for new and replacement equipment, building construction and repair, and land acquisition.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Township Manager

**OBJECTIVE 9.2** Encourage fiscally responsible land development in order to strengthen the tax base and provide diversified employment opportunities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Coordinate with the real estate community, business organizations and chambers of commerce to encourage businesses that not only provide a needed service to the community, but also offer employment to the residents. Develop tax abatement programs which can be used as an inducement for location or expansion of desirable businesses.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Township Manager.

**OBJECTIVE 9.3.** Maintain a reserve fund for maintenance and expansion of community facilities and public works projects, such as



road maintenance, sidewalk construction, street lighting and park maintenance.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Retain funds in the Township operating budget for unanticipated repairs and related expenses, so as not to have to defer needed maintenance and incur added costs. Include funds for traffic signals related to Route 724 upgrades.

**PRIORITY:** Short term

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors

## **PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

**GOAL 10** Encourage intergovernmental coordination and public-private cooperation in Township management.

**OBJECTIVE 10.1** Continue and expand involvement with regional organizations on issues pertinent to the Township.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Township officials should take maximum advantage of opportunities to participate in regional conferences and meetings to represent the interests of the residents and to play a role in planning facilities and services that have an impact both within and beyond the boundaries of the Township.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** All Township elected and appointed officials.

**OBJECTIVE 10.2.** Monitor development trends regionally, relative to impacts on the Township.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Coordinate with officials of nearby municipalities, the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission and the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities as to the patterns of future

development that may affect East Coventry Township. Regional development trends can have an impact on regional transportation systems and affect development pressures on land locally.

**PRIORITY:** Ongoing

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Planning Commission

**OBJECTIVE 10.3.** Provide adequate and appropriate areas for future growth utilizing sound land use planning principles. Concentrated growth areas are encouraged to maintain rural landscape qualities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** As part of the adoption of this Comprehensive Development Plan, a Future Land Use Map will forecast where areas should be designated for future growth, based on population and employment projections. This map should be one factor considered in the rezoning of land for new development. The growth areas should be suitable for either expansion of existing development or compact and concentrated new development, to take advantage of the efficiencies of such growth.

**PRIORITY:** Immediate

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission

## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter, Plan Implementation, has been to provide linkage between the Goals and Objectives of the Plan and methodology for implementation. This takes the form of recommendations for each objective. It is intended that decision makers in the Township, as well as concerned citizens, will use the recommendations as guidance for the whole range of situations which face a municipality. The ongoing operations require sometimes repetitious procedures, but these too need to be focused on the common value to the residents. Longer range objectives cannot be overlooked, as time will eventually bring those issues into a nearer range. Planning is essential in order to avoid to the extent possible trends and patterns which are not beneficial to the Township, its residents and its landscape.

# **APPENDIX**

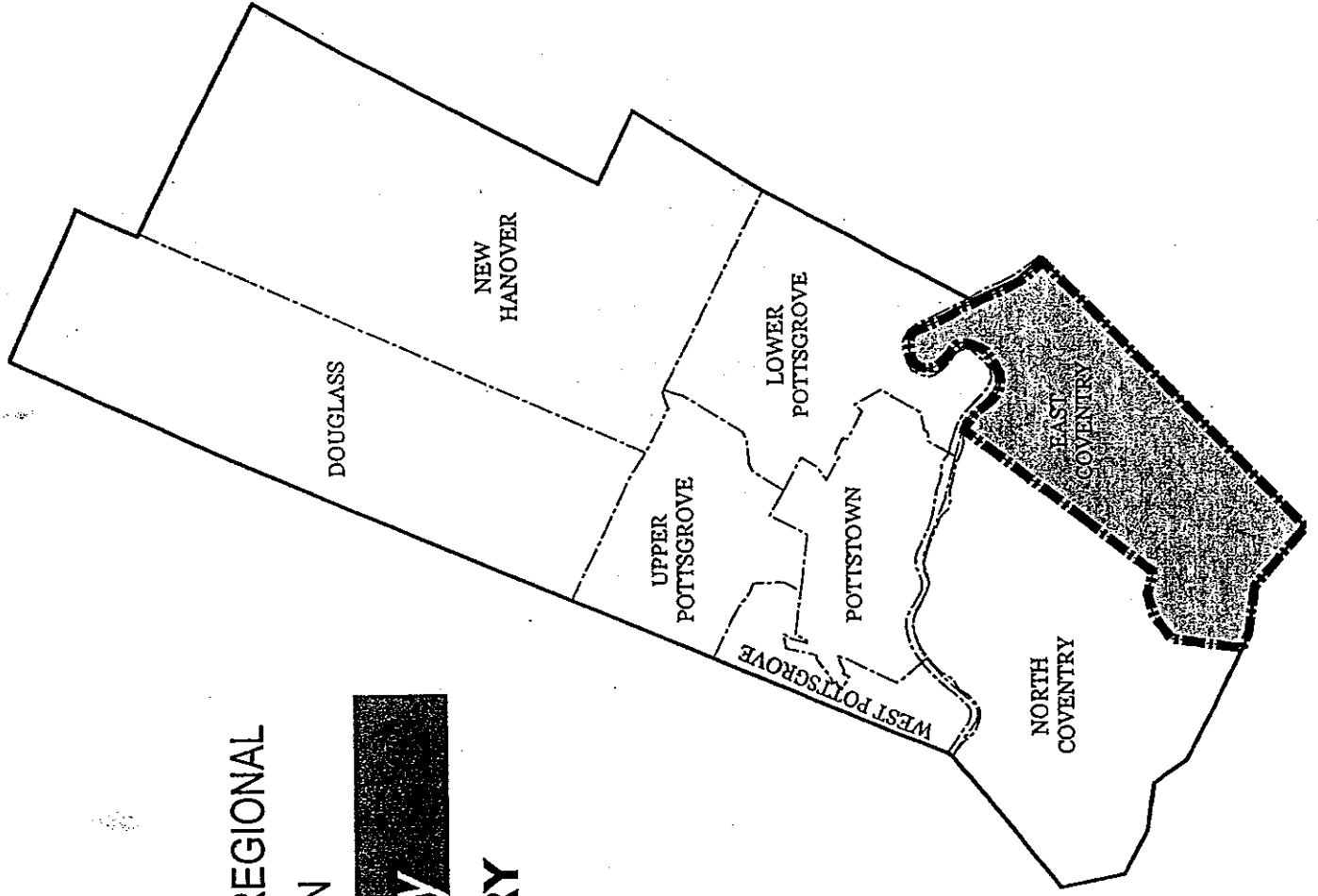
## **POTTSTOWN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **RESIDENT SURVEY EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP RESULTS**

POTTSTOWN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*Resident Survey*

**EAST COVENTRY  
RESULTS**



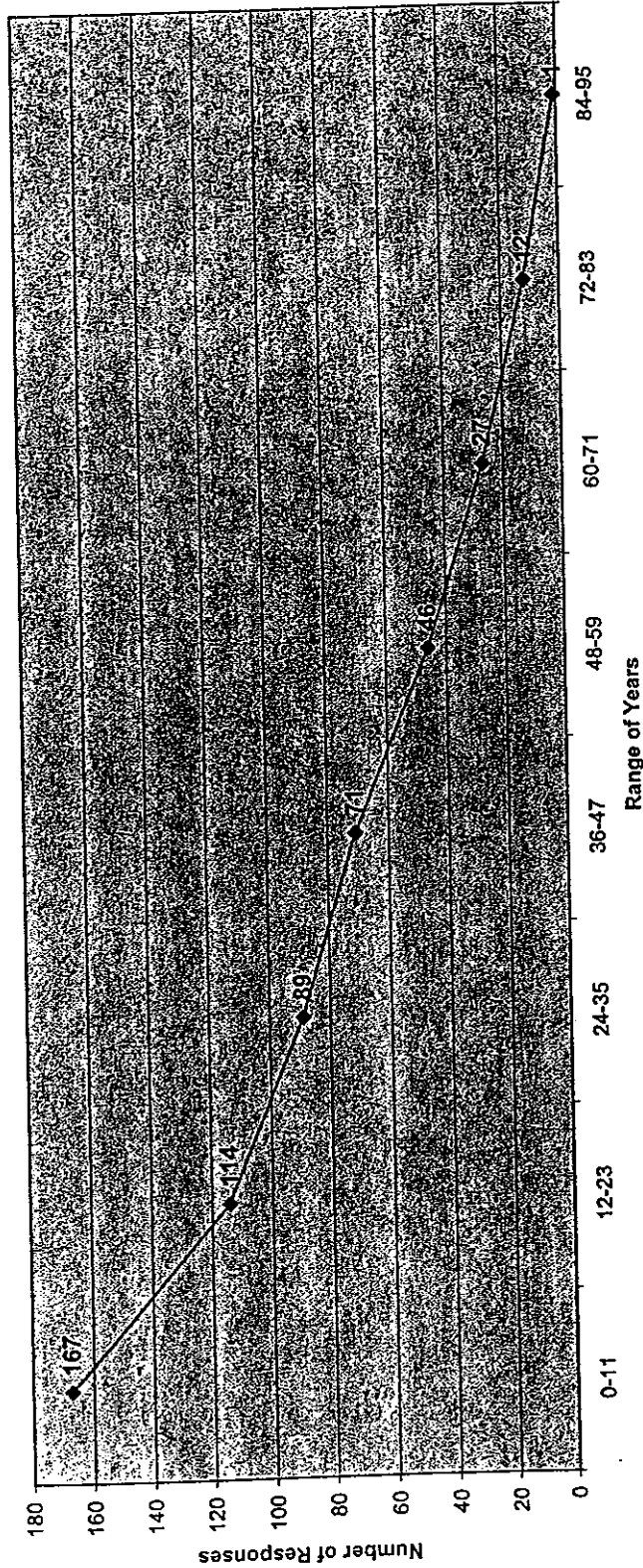
Question 1: In which municipality do you live?

Municipality	Number of Responses	% of Households
Douglass	899	28%
East Coventry	527	32%
Lower Pottsgrove	657	16%
New Hanover	688	27%
North Coventry	738	25%
Pottstown	837	9%
Upper Pottsgrove	339	24%
West Pottsgrove	283	19%
Pottstown Region	4968	19%

## Question 2: How many years have you lived in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region?

### Length of Residence in the Region?

(June 21st, 2002)



Distribution Table

Years of Residence	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
0-11	167	32%
12-23	114	22%
24-35	89	17%
36-47	71	14%
48-59	46	9%
60-71	27	5%
72-83	12	2%
84-95	1	0%

**Mean**  
26 Years

**Median**  
21 Years

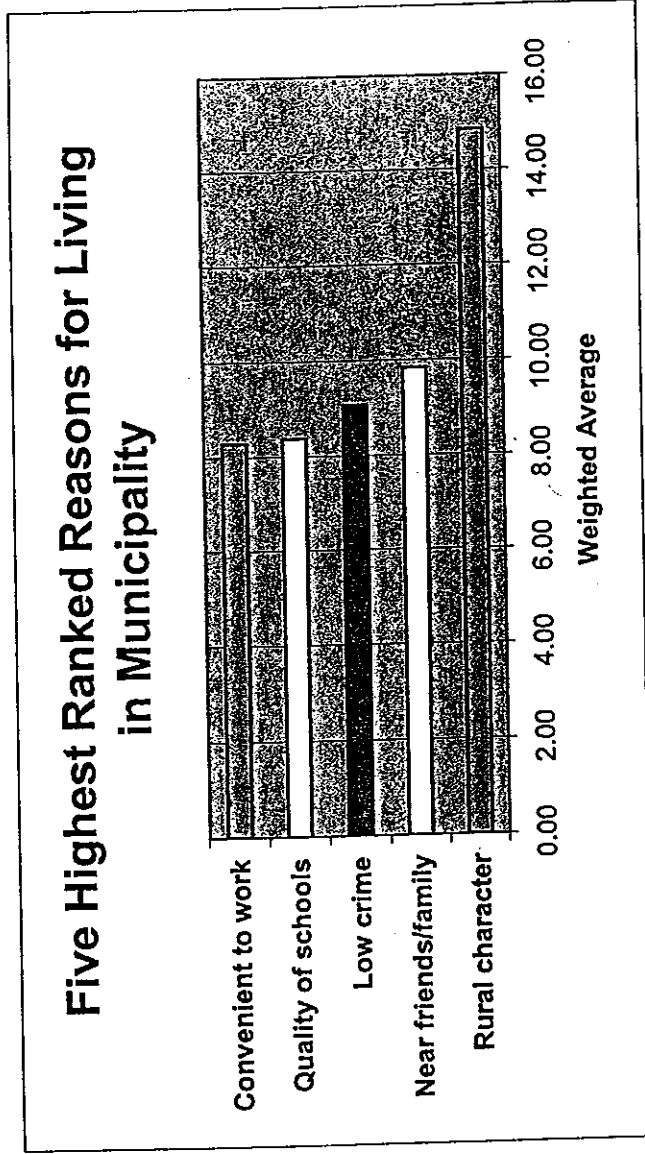
**Mode**  
10 Years

Mean is the sum of all the responses divided by the numbers of responses.

Median splits the sample into two parts with equal numbers of observations.

Mode is the response that occurred most often.

Question 3: Why do you choose to reside in your municipality?

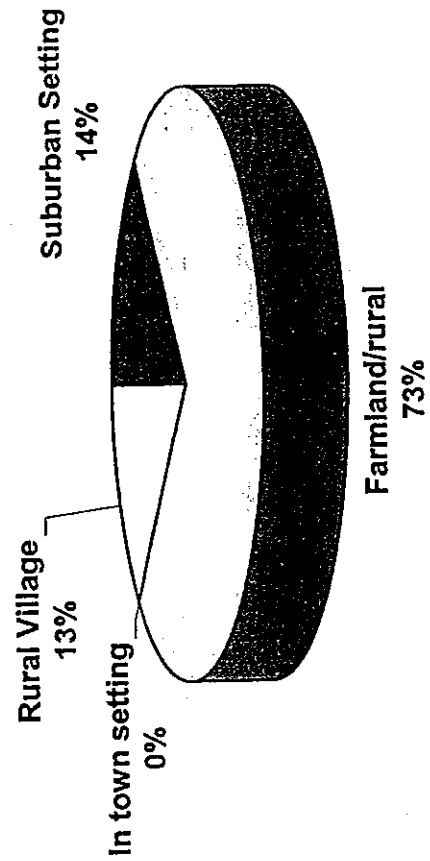


Category	1	2	3	4	5	Weighted Average	First Priority Ranking	Overall Ranking
Born/raised here	96	23	9	15	12	6.25	1	7
Near friends/family	58	111	44	38	19	9.84	2	2
Convenient to work	49	55	63	36	23	8.29	3	5
In town character	0	0	0	1	1	1.06	11	17
Suburban character	14	8	11	5	5	2.40	6	11
Village character	7	8	8	1	3	1.88	7	14
Rural character	216	89	57	36	11	14.85	1	1
Clean air & water	4	52	61	46	49	7.54	9	6
Variety of rec. choices	0	8	6	14	15	2.29	11	12
Job/business	5	7	11	12	11	2.42	8	10
Quality of schools	33	57	51	53	40	8.38	5	4
Low taxes	1	10	17	19	15	2.89	10	8
Variety of housing	4	2	7	6	20	2.16	9	13
Able to walk work/shop	0	0	2	1	0	1.09	11	16
Low crime	5	40	81	71	68	9.07	8	3
Public trans	0	0	1	0	1	1.06	11	17
Cultural amenities	0	0	0	5	2	1.20	11	15
Variety of places to shop	1	1	2	14	34	2.49	10	9



Question 4: Please indicate the character of your immediate neighborhood?

Category	Number of Responses	Percent
Suburban Setting	70	14%
Farmland/rural	379	73%
In town setting	0	0%
Rural Village	68	13%
Total Responses	517	100%



Question 7: Please rank your top five issues that you believe should be addressed by this regional planning effort?

Top Five First Priorities:

1. Agricultural preservation.
2. Open space preservation.
3. Increase job/business opportunities.
4. Improve sewer & water facilities.
5. Improve traffic and road conditions.

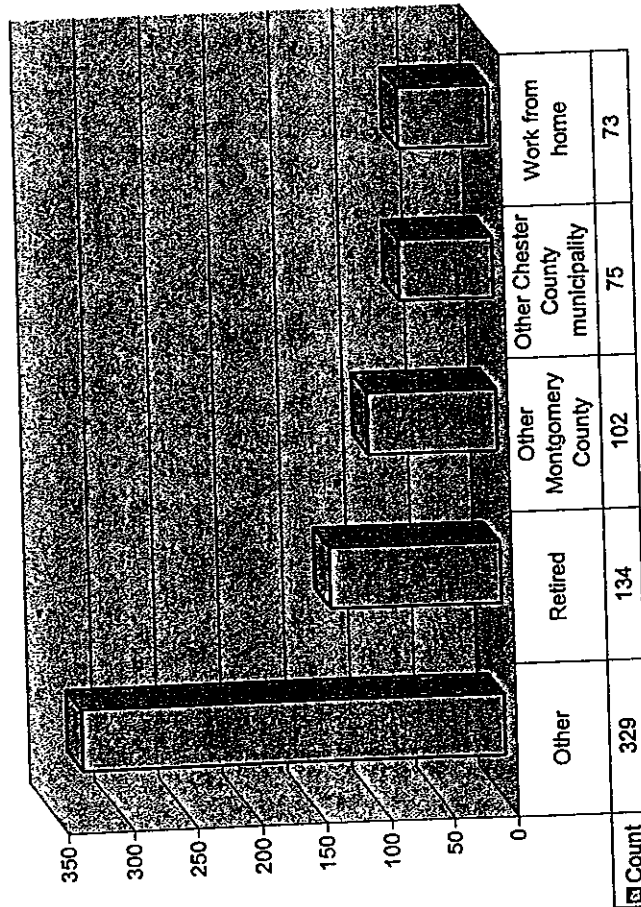
Top Five Overall Priorities:

1. Open space preservation.
2. Agricultural preservation.
3. Improve traffic and road conditions.
4. Historic resource preservation.
5. Develop growth policies.

Category	1	2	3	4	5	Weighted Average	First Priority Ranking	Overall Ranking
Increase job/business opportunities	41	13	18	22	18	4.34	3	8
Agricultural preservation	182	104	41	24	30	12.87	1	2
Improve community safety	5	28	11	25	21	3.57	11	10
Increase variety of housing types	2	0	3	2	6	1.36	13	16
New shopping areas & services	7	8	4	6	6	1.91	10	14
Improve sewage & water facilities	39	37	37	17	18	5.44	4	6
Open space preservation	137	157	72	37	16	13.93	2	1
Historic resource preservation	2	31	99	54	37	7.33	13	4
Add cultural amenities	1	4	6	14	17	2.14	14	13
Develop growth policies	24	24	55	57	47	6.89	6	5
Improve traffic & road conditions	27	35	61	57	60	7.83	5	3
Expand public transportation	9	12	20	28	22	3.57	8	10
Add recreational facilities	0	11	14	30	30	3.33	15	11
Increase community revitalization	3	3	10	18	19	2.46	12	12
Improve air & water quality	19	20	18	40	42	4.93	7	7
Increase affordable housing	0	4	9	9	9	1.86	15	15
Improve quality of schools	8	14	17	36	36	4.09	9	9

Question 5: Where is your place of employment?

Top Five Employment Destinations for Persons Living in East Coventry Township



Place of Employment	Count	Rank
Other	329	1
Retired	134	2
Other Montgomery County municipality	102	3
Other Chester County municipality	75	4
Work from home	73	5
King of Prussia/Plymouth Meeting area	64	6
Collegeville/Phoenixville area	62	7
Exton/Downington/West Chester area	56	8
Pottstown Borough	52	9
East Coventry Township	37	10
City of Philadelphia	21	11
Reading area	19	12
North Coventry Township	19	12
Berks County	15	13
Lower Pottsgrove Township	10	14
Lehigh Valley area	7	15
Upper Pottsgrove Township	7	15
Bucks County	7	15
West Pottsgrove Township	4	16
New Hanover Township	4	16
Douglas Township	2	17

Question 6: Future growth will occur, but growth can be encouraged in certain areas and discouraged in others. Where should new development be encouraged?

Category	Number of Responses	Rank				Weighted Average	Overall Ranking
		1	2	3	4		
In/around existing villages/Pottstown	463	402	30	21	10	3.62	1
In/around existing suburban areas	413	44	263	93	13	2.41	2
In new small towns	391	27	101	250	13	1.91	3
In rural townships	375	8	7	16	344	0.89	4

# Question 8: Where do you shop most frequently for.....?

Shopping Category	Rank	Location	Shopping Category	Rank	Location
Groceries:	1	Trappe/Collegeville/Phoenixville area	Personal Services:	1	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)
	2	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)		2	Pottstown Borough
	3	Coventry Mall		3	Trappe/Collegeville/Phoenixville area
	4	Limerick Township/Royersford area		4	Limerick Township/Royersford area
	5	Pottstown Borough		5	Coventry Mall
Pharmacy & Convenience:	1	Coventry Mall	Furniture & Appliances:	1	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)
	2	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)		2	Limerick Township/Royersford area
	3	Limerick Township/Royersford area		3	Coventry Mall
	4	Trappe/Collegeville/Phoenixville area		4	King of Prussia/Plymouth Meeting area
	5	Pottstown Borough		5	Reading area
Household Goods:	1	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)	Dining:	1	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)
	2	Coventry Mall		2	Exton/Downingtown/West Chester area
	3	Pottstown Borough		3	Trappe/Collegeville/Phoenixville area
	4	King of Prussia/Plymouth Meeting area		4	King of Prussia/Plymouth Meeting area
	4	Exton/Downingtown/West Chester area		5	Reading area
Clothing:	1	Coventry Mall	Entertainment:	1	King of Prussia/Plymouth Meeting area
	2	King of Prussia/Plymouth Meeting area		2	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)
	3	Mail Order		3	Trappe/Collegeville/Phoenixville area
	4	Pottstown Region (Except Mall & Borough)		3	Coventry Mall
	5	Reading area		5	Exton/Downingtown/West Chester area

Question 8: Where do you shop most frequently for.....? (Continued)

Category	Mail Order	Trappel/			King of Prussia	Limerick/ Royersford	Upper		Exton/		Coventry Mail	Pottstown Region			Lancaster Valley	Lehigh Valley	Reading
		Boyertown	Phoenixville	Collegeville/			Perkiomen Valley	Downington/ West Chester	Pottstown Borough	Except Mail & Borough							
Groceries	0	17	114	-	3	71	0	9	90	66	112	9	2	9			
Pharmacy	13	1	64	-	1	85	1	7	137	58	92	1	0	2			
Household	6	4	21	-	24	10	0	24	135	32	154	6	0	10			
Clothing	45	2	7	-	65	7	2	27	232	16	32	4	1	28			
Per. Services	10	6	64	-	15	37	2	17	21	76	92	1	1	8			
Furniture	4	2	23	-	41	58	1	21	55	23	84	18	1	29			
Dining	1	23	44	-	42	21	1	48	10	33	110	10	2	35			
Entertainment	3	6	33	-	76	8	1	31	33	10	59	8	2	19			

Question 9: What types of new or expanded retail stores and services are most needed in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region?

Retail Stores	Number of Responses	Rank
Restaurant	225	1
None	134	2
Grocery	86	3
Bookstore	71	4
Hobby	65	5
Sporting goods	51	6
Home	48	7
Clothing	41	8
Discount	41	9
Hardware	36	10
Electronics	33	11
Furniture	25	12
Fast Food	16	13
Drug	14	14
Convenience	12	15
Business supply	8	16

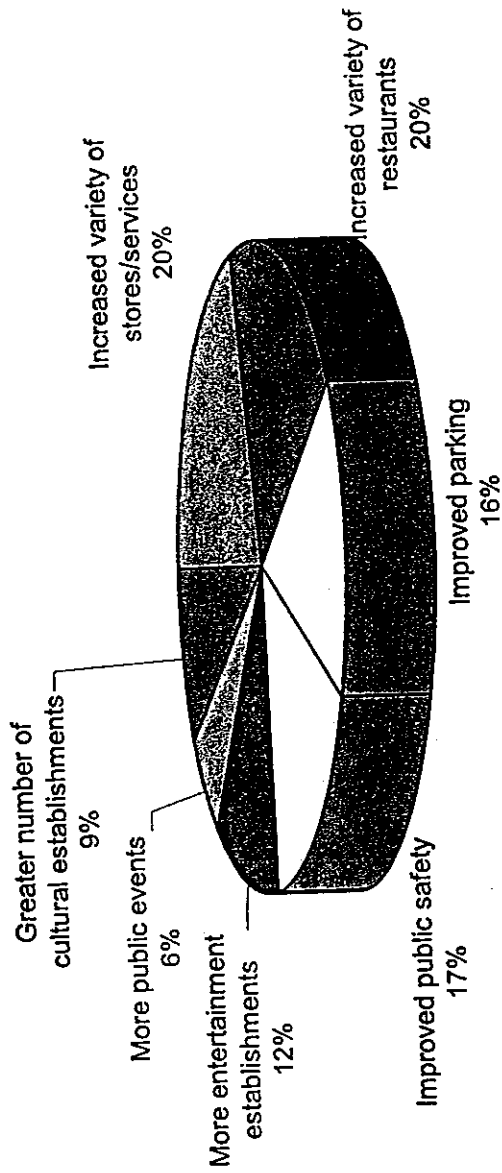
Services	Number of Responses	Rank
None	153	1
Library	109	2
Educational services	61	3
Emergency services	61	4
Physician	56	5
E & A repair	47	6
Dentist	39	7
Laundry/dry cleaner	33	8
Bank/Invest services	24	9
Car repair	23	10
Travel agency	11	11
Hair salon	9	12
Attorney	8	13
Accountant	5	14

Entertainment	Number of Responses	Rank
None	143	1
Playhouse	139	2
Music center	126	3
Movie Theater	80	4
Sports complex	77	5
Visual arts/Art gallery	14	6

Question 10: Which of the following would increase your visits to downtown Pottstown?

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Increased variety of stores/services	295	20%
Increased variety of restaurants	298	20%
Improved parking	235	16%
Improved public safety	244	17%
More entertainment establishments	172	12%
More public events	89	6%
Greater number of cultural establishments	128	9%
Total Responses	1461	100%

### Activities to Increase Visits to Downtown Pottstown





Question 11: What are the top 3 transportation issues in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region and the top 3 transportation issues in your municipality?

Top 3 Transportation Issues

Region:

1. Traffic Congestion
2. Parking
3. Road Maintenance

Municipal:

1. Narrow roads
2. Road Maintenance
3. Bicycle lanes

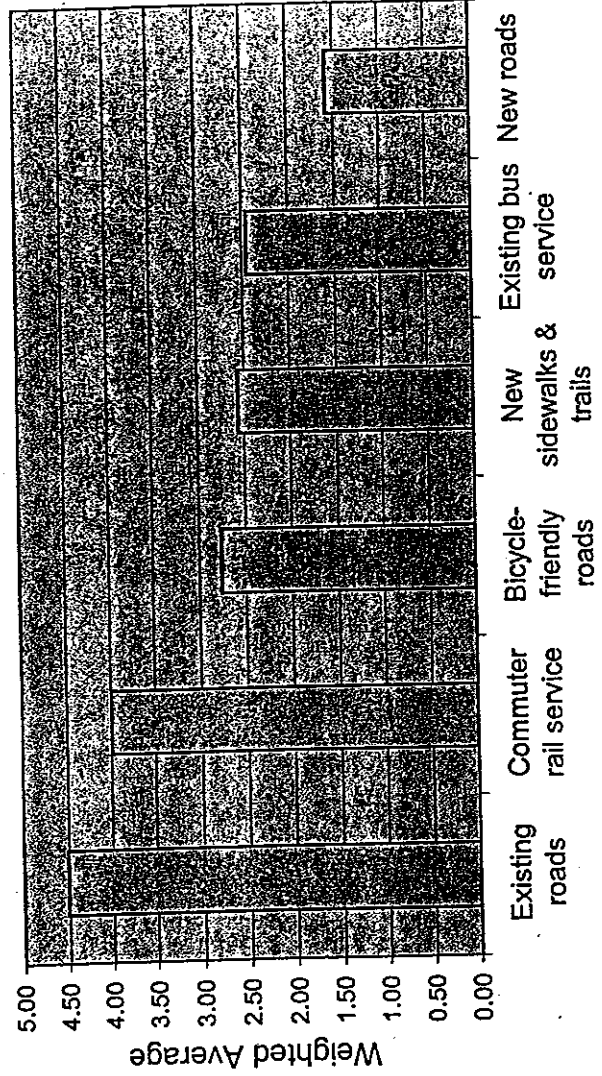
Pottstown Region			
Category	Number of Responses	Percent	Rank
Road Maintenance	150	16%	3
Traffic Congestion	212	23%	1
Parking	170	18%	2
Narrow roads	58	6%	6
Truck Traffic	70	7%	5
Bicycle lanes	67	7%	5
Signage	17	2%	8
Signalization	41	4%	7
Sidewalks/crossings	37	4%	7
Public transit	113	12%	4

Municipal			
Category	Number of Responses	Percent	Rank
Narrow roads	206	23%	1
Road Maintenance	194	22%	2
Traffic Congestion	110	12%	4
Truck Traffic	82	9%	5
Public transit	73	8%	6
Sidewalks/crossings	46	5%	7
Bicycle lanes	120	13%	3
Parking	5	1%	10
Signage	33	4%	8
Signalization	25	3%	9

Question 12: Please rank the following transportation improvements from 1 - 6, with 1 being the most important/needed?

Category	Rank						Weighted Average	First Priority Ranking	Overall Ranking
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Existing roads	216	92	80	24	25	5	4.51	1	1
Existing bus service	14	68	75	88	81	47	2.45	5	5
Commuter rail service	183	78	60	32	47	33	3.99	2	2
New sidewalks & trails	18	67	78	103	84	20	2.56	4	4
Bicycle-friendly roads	39	90	74	60	70	52	2.76	3	3
New roads	11	41	30	42	32	191	1.58	6	6

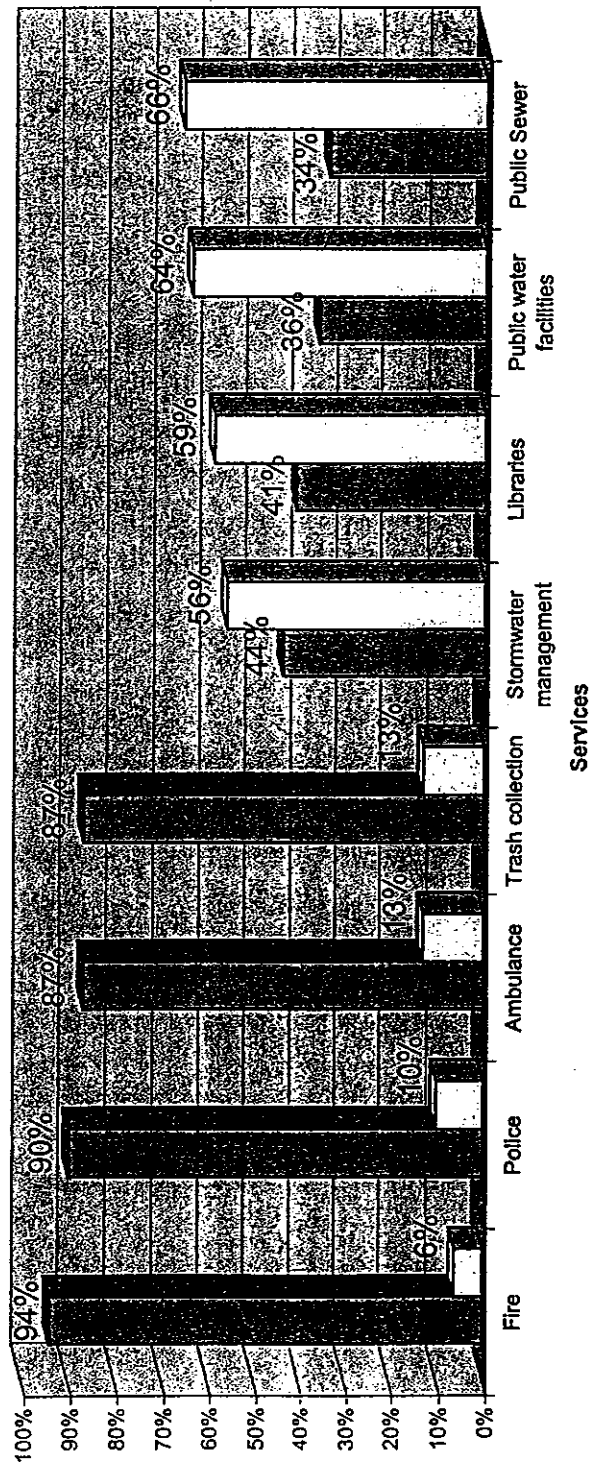
## Overall Preferred Transportation Improvements for the Region



Question 13: Are the following services adequate in your area?

Service	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
Public sewer facilities	163	323	34%	66%
Public water facilities	174	312	36%	64%
Stormwater management	215	271	44%	56%
Police	436	50	90%	10%
Fire	455	31	94%	6%
Ambulance	421	65	87%	13%
Trash collection	421	65	87%	13%
Public libraries	197	289	41%	59%

Are Services Adequate  
In Your Area?



Question 14: Is your municipality adequately served by public recreation facilities?

Yes:	207	43%
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No:	279	57%
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If no, what types of recreational facilities would you be willing to have tax monies spent on to provide or expand in your community?

Facilities	Number of Responses	Percent	Rank
Hiking/walking trails	151	19%	1
Passive open space	116	15%	2
Biking trails	87	11%	3
Playing fields	74	9%	4
Swimming pools	65	8%	5
Playing courts	49	6%	6
Picnic areas	44	6%	7
Cultural arts center	42	5%	8
Equestrian trails	40	5%	9
Fishing areas	33	4%	10
Hunting areas	24	3%	11
Multipurpose activity rooms	20	3%	12
Camping areas	19	2%	13
Gymnasium	15	2%	14
Boating facilities	12	2%	15